The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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THE TRUTH ABOUT SPAIN

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESS: NO. 3

TO H. L. MENCKEN, Baltimore Sunpapers, Baltimore, Maryland. My dear Mencken: I have just finished reading your "Note on News," in the *Evening Sun,* of Baltimore. Some kind friend of mine sent it to me, knowing that I should not only be entertained and instructed by any writing of yours, but that what you say on the subject under discussion in this essay is of special interest to me just now. For I am attempting the almost impossible task of persuading the responsible owners and directors of our press associations and the better class of honest newspapers to consider the lamentable fact that our supposedly free and independent American press is being sabotaged from within its rapidly crumbling walls by a miscellaneous set of radical fanatics, radical rascals, and congenital ignoramuses, in the shape of incompetent or treacherous "foreign correspondents," and a riff-raff of badly educated, underpaid and miserably mistreated "reporters" and copy-desk editors, many of whom cannot understand, or make, a plain statement, in plain English—or, if you prefer it, and I don't object to your preference, in the "American language."

That there is no such thing as wholly objective news, which is the premise laid down in your briefly expressed but very important thesis, is true. It follows that, as you say, news is not merely a statement of overt facts; "it is some concrete individual's opinion of the truth and significance of those facts." Of course; whence it further follows, and irresistibly so, that upon the personal character, private philosophy, individual education, and stock of sound general knowledge, possessed by working newspapermen, must depend the value to the public of what they write, upon

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any subject, from the hanging which you use as an illustration of your thesis, to, well, let us say the reporting and editorial interpretation of the war in Spain. The latter subject has been forced upon me as the peg on which to hang my own recent remarks, written and spoken, upon the present perilous position of the American press.

Now, it is my conviction (sadly I say it) that a degradation of the personnel of the mass of reporters and editors serving our press has developed with horrid speed and throughout a great part of the American press during my own time as a newspaperman: which covers more than thirty-five years. Can it be that only myself and a few other old fogies, or cranks, hold this opinion? What do you think? I believe it to be fairly general among American journalists.

Let me give you a few rough-and-ready instances of what I mean, hot from the red-hot griddle, so to speak, upon which I have been frizzling for some weeks now, ever since I opened up my contribution to this tremendously important discussion in the pages of THE COMMONWEAL, and followed up that rash act by the still rasher step of becoming the secretary-general of the American Committee for Spanish Relief. This Committee is trying in all good faith to raise money to relieve the victims of the war in Spain. It is duly registered with the State Department, under the provisions of the Neutrality Act, and, therefore, in dispensing funds it cannot be partizan. It would be risking a $50,000 fine, and a jail sentence for all concerned, to be otherwise than non-partizan. Naturally, however, the Committee means to see that part of it goes to the millions of sufferers in the White, or Nationalist, or Rebel region of Spain. Millions of American money has been poured into the hands of the Reds; little or none has gone to the Whites, in that major portion of Spanish territory now controlled by the military group which rebelled against the Madrid government, on the plea, which I consider valid and justified, that the Madrid government was not the "representative," or "legitimate," or "republican" régime it set out to be. Nevertheless it still proclaims itself to be representative, and is so considered by the majority of Americans because the American press has overtly or covertly upheld that claim not merely in its editorial columns (where opinions properly belong), but in its headlines and in its dispatches from its bizarre flock of "foreign correspondents" in Spain. Hardly a man jack of these "experts" understood sufficient Spanish to order their drinks; or possessed any knowledge beyond rudimentary scraps of propaganda emanating from Madrid or Valencia concerning what the struggle was all about. But almost all of them plumped for the Reds even before they went to Spain, and accepted the weird combination of Communists, Anarchists, Syndicalists and Socialists who took charge of the Madrid government after it came illegally (as I maintain) into power in 1936, and promptly ousted all the real democrats and honest republicans who had been laboring for forty years to get their republic.

They got their republic—of a sort, a sorry sort—but, as it was said in Moscow, as early as the birth of the Third Republic in 1931, by the secretary of the Spanish Communist party, "Now that the republic is here, on to the revolution." Well, the revolution came—but are the results really those ripe and perfect fruits of the age-old evolutionary processes of democratic development which the wishful thinkers of the "Left" Wing of the American intelligentsia try so hard to consider them as being, in the face of all the facts which say "No" to such preposterous nonsense. But those facts do not reach the American public; we must allow for that nasty truth. Which lamentable situation should receive prompt and searching attention by all Americans concerned to protect the honor, the dignity and the freedom of the press. Will you not lend your powerful support to such an inquiry?

P. S.—As I write (12 o'clock, noon, May 19, the day of the Mass Meeting for Spanish Relief in Madison Square Garden, New York), some twenty members of a group calling itself the "Spanish Anti-Fascist Committee" of 59-61 Henry Street, Brooklyn, are picketing the offices of THE COMMONWEAL, as a protest against the action of its Editor, myself, in planning and directing the Mass Meeting of tonight under the auspices of the American Committee for Spanish Relief, of which I am secretary-general, in cooperation with the American Association against Communism.

Under hysterical slogans printed on banners, the demonstrators are loudly denouncing THE COMMONWEAL, as they parade in front of the office building at 386 Fourth Avenue, while agents of the Communists and other Left-wing groups are placarding subway stations with posters declaring that we who are the sponsors of the meeting are the "baby killers" responsible for the slaying of the children of Madrid. The busy New Yorkers hardly stop to look at the demonstration, being well accustomed to such affairs, and full of the typical New Yorker's provincial indifference to anything that requires the use of his reason, or the employment of his faculties of analysis.

"Communists?" they say. "Oh, it's the bunk! What's all the shouting about? A few Reds make jackasses of themselves, and a lot of otherwise hard-boiled stand-patters and reactionaries yell themselves red in the face—but why take either crowd seriously?"

Well—when I tried to engage rooms at the traditional New York center of committee head-

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quarters, the Biltmore Hotel, for the American Committee for Spanish Relief, the board of directors of the hotel said, "No!" They told me they were afraid of the Communists—despite New York's police. When some other committee of an anti-Red description tried to get a contribution from the directors of Madison Square Garden, it was laughed at, and refused. "The Communists are our best customers," said the Garden business men; "and as business men, we are not paying for opposition to them. They engage the Garden several times a year." At a cost of $3,500 to $4,000 a night—as to my horror I have just discovered.

All the Catholic churches of New York are being showered with Communist pamphlets, with distorted quotations from papal encyclicals on social justice, and bare-faced lies about Catholicism, and cunning (yet really stupid) arguments to Catholics to join the Communists. And in the newspaper offices of New York, and in the universities and schools, and in the drawing-rooms of Park Avenue, and in several of the pulpits, of New York, are the Communists, in key positions for the influencing of public opinion. And all of these forces are supporting the ridiculous thesis that Spain is ruled from Valencia by a "legitimate," a "constitutional," a "democratic" government deserving the moral and financial support of democratic America.

What nonsense! I challenge that group to select a spokesman for that thesis, and I will engage to meet him in public debate, taking the negative side. I will cheerfully post any amount up to $1,000 of my own (or borrowed) money to guarantee the hiring of a hall, or the purchase of radio time.

Let's get at the truth about Spain. The issue of this controversy is of deep concern to genuine American democracy.

Week by Week

HURRYING back to Washington from a period of relaxation, the President confronted an incipient congressional revolt. There was evidence a plenty that the Senate was in no mood to endorse outright the now famous plan for rejuvenating the Supreme Court. Even Mr. Lewis's blunt announcement that those who dissented would "hear from home" seemed to have very little effect. Uprisings in the interest of economy were manifest in both houses, but there were not adjudged immediately serious. The major phenomenon was a growing unrest over the pressure of what has been termed dictation. In order to understand this feeling, one must bear in mind that certain new laws have aroused widespread fears. A convenient example is the summary of information now demanded of the clergy. They are obliged to submit data concerning membership, finances and conduct of their churches. A statement regarding existing indebtedness is to be appended. That all this should arouse fears regarding the latent future intentions of the government is eminently natural. When one multiplies such instances one sees why the psychology of large and influential groups should be governed by sentiments akin to rebellion. All this has nothing to do with Court reconstruction as such, but finds in the debate about that reform a convenient outlet. One will await further moves by the President. A man so extraordinarily gifted with "second sight" into the workings of the public mind has not yet been caught in an impasse, and our guess is that he never will be caught. Of necessity, reform movements cannot be carried on indefinitely. There must be times of pause and resistance. And yet, who will doubt that in the long run insistence upon reform is the really positive value?

The Trend of Events

COMMEMORATIONS of Pope Pius's eightieth birthday will be held generally throughout the world, mingling thanksgiving for so long a life dedicated to the service of God and man with petitions for strength amidst tribulation. We have always felt a very especial gratitude for having lived in the time of this genuinely illustrious man, who has met so many grave issues unflinchingly and in the spirit of deepest reverence for the Christian life. If ever an age called for anathemas it is this, and yet there have been singularly few of them. The emphasis has been placed confidently, obediently, on the positive values of the Church's teaching; and the endeavor to understand and sympathize with everyone who is of good-will stands enshrined forever in writings which the nations treasure. Even a secular journalist miles removed from Catholic loyalties might have used the encyclicals for his guidance in the sure feeling that he was defending the basic verities of civilization. In a sense it has been this great Pontiff's misfortune to live in an era when all that had been gained for religion in an overt sense during a century—the rights to organize and work freely, without subjection to the State—seems in danger of being lost in a cataclysm. Yet the greatest Popes have lived during just such periods. They symbolize the Rock of Peter, which is above all a place of refuge and a house wherein one may be at home. And so we greet the approaching eightieth birthday as countless millions of people do, knowing that prayer triumphs in the end over life and death.

For the Pope

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DEBATES regarding the importance of the airplane as a military weapon continue without any positive decision. It has been proved in Spain that an army cannot win if it does not have good planes in sufficient quantity, but it has likewise been shown that the air force alone cannot win either. Bombers can demoralize the civilian population and create grave problems for the national commissariat. If given a real chance this arm of the service might wreak incalculable havoc in such a densely congested area as is that of London; but it seems unlikely that such an opportunity will be afforded. Smaller towns and the open country cannot be adequately defended, but action there will never be decisive. Consequently the major test is still at the front. One cannot learn from the Spanish war what the effect of wholesale use of fighting aircraft might be, since the number of planes employed has been too small. If the thousands of ships now owned by Germany or Russia were suddenly thrown into battle, it is difficult to see what means of defense the infantry and artillery could provide. That makes the military problems of smaller powers far more serious than they have previously been. Their troops might put up a sharp fight for delay, at least, taking advantage of fortifications and terrain. But what could they do against a rain of destruction from the air? In so far as airships themselves are concerned, the emphasis has now been placed on speed. No matter how well constructed the slow ship may be, it is bound to be as out of place in modern combat as the horse is on a mechanized battlefield. In short, some few things seem definitely established. The rest is mystery.

The Airplane and War

IT IS certainly with no wish to exploit its publicity value that we advert here briefly to the investigation being carried on in Brooklyn public high schools by the District Attorney of that borough. But we feel that the situation points a warning to the general public which it would be suicidal to ignore. A few years ago, at the height of the agitation for the repeal of the federal statute forbidding the sending of contraceptive information through the mails, this magazine published facts plainly evidencing that a campaign was already in full swing to corrupt high-school students in this city for the profit of manufacturers of contraceptives. The extent and the serious significance of those facts was questioned by some readers whose optimism regarding human nature, we could not help feeling, did more credit to their hearts than to their heads. That groups of adolescents—especially of adolescents so little under the protective supervision of their homes as public high-school students in a large city—should be canvassed by salesmen of this particular enterprise, was a foregone conclusion; such groups are a made-to-order prey. However, we should have been only too glad had events confuted us, and disproved what we regarded as the painful, common-sense logic of the situation. But unhappily they did not confute us. If what is alleged concerning the Brooklyn schools is correct, to even a fraction of the extent alleged, that borough has an extremely grave moral situation on its hands. Nor can it be supposed that the situation is confined to a few schools in one borough. Racketeers capable of employing students to market these wares are not likely to have been so modest in taking advantage of their opportunities. We cannot but deplore that the facts were given to the newspapers at this stage of the investigation, prematurely, as it seems to us. But since they have been given, the time has come to ask the public what it means to do about the rooted thing of which this episode is only one noxious flower.

A Warning and an Appeal

IT SEEMS obvious that Dr. Dodd, that excellent historian and devoted Jeffersonian doomed for his sins to reside among the Nazis as ambassador, ventured momentarily into the realms of creative art. His story of the wicked billionaire plotting to become dictator of these United States reminds one of certain classic bed-time yarns by means of which the kids can be just a little frightened. Not very frightened, of course. Hitherto the dictators who have drilled nations in patriotic poses have been men poor in this world's goods but prodigal of oratory and propaganda. Our tyrant to be is at least of a markedly different stamp. Looking over the available billionaires, one finds that they suffer either from dyspepsia or from heart conditions, that their military records make woefully poor reading, and that nobody ever turned out to hear them speak. It is well-nigh impossible to imagine such a one staring about fiercely in leather boots. Or submitting patiently to the clicking of endless official cameras. Or fussing to a great extent about somebody's grandmother. The more one thinks about the matter, the more certain one feels that Dr. Dodd's dictator would be very nice. He would always be able to pay the Party bills, with some help from cowed friends who would doubtless blackball him from their clubs. You could depend upon him to have a grandson at Yale, subject to ragging by Johnny Berdan. Finally—and this is doubtless the best thing of all—he would never pretend that he had written his memoirs himself. Upon reflection one is convinced that Dr. Dodd is an incurable American optimist foresworn to rosy-hued glasses. He simply cannot imagine being lorded over by the kind of person to whom he has recently been so much exposed.

Dr. Dodd's Nightmare

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FIGHTING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

By JOHN A. O'BRIEN

In three papers, of which this is the first, Father O'Brien will endeavor to outline the challenge to religion which is now being offered by radical groups, particularly the Communists, as well as to summarize a program of remedial social action. In this paper he explains the attitude of the Church toward revolutionary Marxism, showing that opposition here does not mean, cannot mean, sponsorship of Fascism. For both are expressions of "the same fundamental philosophy—the absolute supremacy of the State."—The Editors.

IN CERRO DE LOS ANGELES, on a spot marking the geographical center of Spain, a monumental statue of Christ had been erected to stand forever as a symbol of the dedication of the Spanish nation to the Sacred Heart. When a regiment of Spanish Communists stood with loaded guns before this great statue and poured volley after volley of steel into the figure of Christ until it fell in fragments to the ground, Communism manifested to the world in a graphic and dramatic manner its hatred of God, religion and the Church. The picture of this shooting was published in newspapers throughout the civilized world. More clearly and convincingly than a volume of words, it portrayed the attitude of Communism toward religion. To manifest further their renunciation of the Christian Faith and their espousal of the militant atheism of Soviet Russia, they then changed the name of the hill, Cerro de Los Angeles, meaning Hill of the Angels, to Cerro Rojo, meaning "Red" Hill.

More than 20,000 religious institutions in Spain—churches, convents, monasteries, orphanages, hospitals—have been burned and destroyed according to documentary reports published in *La Croix du Midi* in Tolouse, France. Eleven bishops have been murdered. The number of priests who have been ruthlessly slaughtered is estimated by the Spanish College in Rome on the basis of 200 letters from bishops and clergy and from the testimony of 8 bishops and 188 priests who have come to Rome since the beginning of the rebellion, to range between 40 and 50 percent of the total priesthood of Spain.

Before the present outbreak there were in Spain 60 bishops, 33,500 priests and 26,640 religious. In 9 dioceses 80 percent of the priests have been killed. In one diocese, that of Malaga, 90 percent of the priests have been murdered. All the churches in 23 dioceses have been burned. (N.C.W.C. cable from Vatican City appearing in the *Register*, Denver, February 13, 1937.) Even the gentle nuns have not escaped the furious blood lust of the Communists, a number of them having been slaughtered with women Reds aiding in their massacre. The whole world stands aghast at the wholesale crucifixion of the Christian people of Spain.

Nor is this action of the Communists peculiar to those in Spain. It is typical of Communism wherever it finds an opportunity to vent its hatred of religion. Over the doors of the Kremlin in the city of Moscow the Communists have carved the words of Karl Marx, which sound the keynote of their philosophy: "Religion is the opiate of the people." After the overthrow of the Czar, they launched a campaign for the extermination of religion from all the states of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Lest the contemporaneity of the slaughter in Spain tend to overshadow the orgy in Russia, let it be remembered that according to their own newspaper, the *Third Internationale*, published in Moscow, the Communists on coming into power murdered the royal family, 28 bishops and archbishops, 6,775 clergymen, 6,575 teachers, 8,800 doctors, 54,850 officers, 260,000 soldiers, 150,000 police officers, 48,000 gendarmes, 355,250 intellectuals, 198,000 workers, and 915,000 peasants. In short, more than 2,000,000 human beings were slaughtered like cattle, 432,279 from the cultured class and 1,571,000 from the ranks of the laborers and peasants. There in brief is the strange disregard of the Communists for the sanctity of human life. There is their furious hatred of God and of all who minister to the religious needs of mankind.

Is it any wonder then that the Church condemns Communism and opposes it as the greatest menace to Christianity and to all religious faith in the world today? What then is Communism? It is an economic theory, a political movement, and a philosophy of life. Economically, it denies the right of the individual to own any productive property, asserting that the instruments of production should all be in the hands of the State. Politically, it differs from Socialism in advocating violence, revolution and open class warfare as the only effective weapons for the establishment of the communistic state with its absolute monopoly of the land and wealth of a nation. As a philosophy it is based upon the materialistic interpretation of history, denies the existence of God and the after-life, asserting that man is merely a social animal with no spiritual nature and no eternal destiny.

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Militant atheism is of its essence, and its primary crusade is the wiping out of all belief in God, immortality and the spiritual nature of man. That is why there is a fanatic crusading zeal among Communists which is generally lacking among the proponents of a merely political movement or economic system. They have the zeal of a religious crusader, but a zeal that is turned entirely toward the destruction of all religion.

Listen to Lenin, the father of the Soviet Republic:

> Religion must be abolished. The best country is a Godless country. If religion would pass out quietly, our attitude will be one of benevolent tolerance. But if it resists, we will hasten its exit by violence proportionate to its resistance.

Listen to Stalin, the present dictator of Russia:

> Keep children away from religious training and home life until they are eighteen years of age, then they will be good Communists.

How well they have succeeded in rooting out religion from the minds of the young as a result of this policy of forbidding all religious instruction while conducting a campaign of militant atheism is related in a United Press dispatch from Moscow and carried in the press of our country. The dispatch tells of the almost complete disappearance of youth from the few places of worship left standing. A correspondent from Moscow writes:

> Services now are attended mostly by old or middle-aged women, fewer men and a number of children brought by mothers and grandmothers. Youth is absent. With the gradual diminution of congregations, those who had gone over to the New Church dropped out first and few New churches continue to operate. Emphasis against religion undoubtedly is strong in all organizations, and the term "churchgoer" is one of condemnation. The press exerts its influence against worship [United Press dispatch, Moscow, January 23, 1937].

The keynote of the government's educational policy since the rise of the Communists to control is thus frankly stated by the late head of the education department:

> We hate Christianity and Christians. Even the best of them must be considered as our worst enemies. They preach love of one's neighbor and mercy, which is contrary to our principles. . . . What we need is hatred ["American Plan of Government vs. Communism," by Dr. David Kinley, in *Our Sunday Visitor*, January 17, 1937].

One of the best summations of Socialism and its implications which I have seen is that given in the article quoted above, by Dr. David Kinley, president-emertius of the University of Illinois and one of the outstanding scholars of our day:

> Communism is economically unsound, religiously atheistic, socially destructive, ethically indefensible, and morally debasing. Certainly there is much that is wrong in our present social arrangements, a statement that is true of every form of society that history has known. But Communism is not the road to its elimination. The right road is along an ideal practise of the law of love, faith in God, deeper sense of personal responsibility for one's neighbors for social progress and for righteousness, a deeper and wider feeling of the brotherhood of man.

Because the Church opposes Communism and invites people of all faiths to join with her in presenting a united front to Communism, which she characterizes as the greatest menace to Christian civilization today, the impression has arisen in some circles that the Church looks with ill-concealed favor upon Fascism. Thus the *Christian Century* opposed the entry of Protestants into the campaign launched by the Pontiff against Communism on this ground. But the inference is unfounded. For the Church opposes Fascism and Nazism as well as Communism. The latter has been more violent in its war against religion and has naturally been regarded as the gravest menace. The real issue at stake, however, is the totalitarianism of the State.

While Communism and Fascism differ in their origins and seem poles apart in their goals, they are both expressions of the same fundamental philosophy—the absolute supremacy of the State over the political, social, economic, cultural and religious life of the individual. He is reduced to a tiny cog in the vast machinery of the State. His individual rights are usurped by the Colossus of the State which rides like a juggernaut over the traditional liberties of the individual, trampling upon his freedom to plan his own life, to fashion his own culture, and to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience. Fascism under Mussolini has been favorable on the whole to the influence of religion upon the people, but has shown a determination to dominate the consciences of the young and to claim a prior allegiance that gives forebodings of future trouble.

Nazism under Hitler has been frequently openly hostile to both the Protestant and Catholic Churches, and has sought to reduce them to mere arms of the all-powerful State. The dictatorial power lodged in both Fascism and Nazism is a constant threat to the religious freedom of the individual—a sword of Damocles suspended by a thread over the individual's head, keeping him in anxiety and turmoil. Indeed, not only have the Nazis sought to substitute a religion of blood and mythology for Christianity and Judaism, but it has given signs of turning all its vast powers of destruction upon these historic faiths after the menace of Communism has been removed.

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No, the Church does not look with favor or complacency upon the growth of either of these forms of government in America. From an experience of many centuries she knows the dangers they present to the rights of the individual. But the greatest menace at the present time is from the world-wide spread of Communism. For that reason the Church singles it out as the target for her first attack, and invites people of all faiths and indeed people of no definite religious affiliation but of good-will to unite in a campaign for the preservation of our civilization with its guaranties for the treasured rights and liberties of the individual. For in her philosophy so sacred is the personality of the individual citizen that he has rights which cannot be abridged even by the State. He does not exist for the State, or for the politico-social order, but these exist for him. The index of their worth is the measure in which they safeguard his rights and his freedom and afford him opportunities for the cultivation of his own social and cultural life and the attainment of his spiritual autonomy.

While the Church does not undertake to decree what form of political government her children should establish, and while she is capable of adapting herself to every form of legitimate government, there would seem to be no questioning of the fact that she thrives and flourishes in a special manner in a democracy and finds it peculiarly suited to her genius and character. Here she enjoys the largest measure of freedom—freedom to worship, freedom to teach, freedom to carry on her extensive ministry of charity and philanthropy. Here she is least hampered by the intrusions of an all-powerful State into her exclusive domain—that of the religious and spiritual life. In the Middle Ages there was a unity of religious faith among all the citizens so that a union of Church and State seemed natural and afforded certain advantages. Today when difference of religious belief is the most marked characteristic of society, such union would spell nothing but friction and would be unpalatable to all parties. Complete separation of Church and State with freedom to both within their separate domains, and friendly cooperation where joint interests are concerned, has proved the most satisfactory plan.

Here too the Church is enabled to keep close to her people, and to serve them most effectively. Dependent upon their free will offerings for her maintenance, she is free from the danger of leaning upon the appropriations of the State, with a consequent lessening of her freedom and independence. The editor of the *Christian Century* and any of our non-Catholic citizens need have no fear, therefore, that the Church is secretly in sympathy with Fascism or with anything but the continued perfection of the democratic ideal to which we in America are committed.

The emphasis which the Church puts upon the sanctity and inviolability of the rights of the individual, rights which democracy aims particularly to safeguard, reflects the peculiar compatibility of the Church with our American democracy and shows the kinship of their genius and spirit. In the eyes of the Church, the right of the individual to that large measure of freedom to work out his own salvation, to worship, to argue freely according to his own conscience, to determine the pattern of his own culture, to develop his own personality, free from the stereotyping power of the State, are so sacred and inalienable that she stands ready to throw the bulwark of her defense around the humblest citizen who is threatened with an invasion of these personal rights by any power whatsoever.

The Church is therefore a true friend and stalwart champion of democracy in America. Her friendship does not spring from motives of expedience or opportunism, after the manner of the politician, but goes infinitely deeper—down to that tremendous emphasis which she places upon the sanctity and inviolability of the rights of the individual, an emphasis which is peculiarly characteristic of our American democracy. As long as the Church is free to express her mind she will lift her voice to the skies whenever the sanctity of the human personality and the treasured rights of the individual to that large measure of freedom to live, to believe and to worship according to his conscience, are jeopardized by the encroachments of an all-powerful State, be it Communist or Fascist.

In what then does the real defense against Communism consist? Not in merely calling it names, nor in denunciation of its abuses and atrocities. The real defense against Communism is the removal of the abuses, the injustices in our economic and social order against which Communism stands in righteous protest. It is these gross inequities and injustices which constitute the breeding-ground of Communism and give it the vitality and appeal which it possesses. The only effective warfare against it will be waged by sanitating our social and industrial order, making it conformable to the laws of retributive and distributive justice, and sensitizing the conscience of the wealthy and the powerful to the rights of the poor and the downtrodden.

That these breeding swamps are numerous in our country and cover much territory no honest observer of the grossly unfair concentration of wealth and of the instruments of production in the hands of the comparatively few, can deny. With 10 percent of the population controlling more than 90 percent of the wealth of the nation, we have a condition of unstable equilibrium which breeds industrial strife and social unrest.

(This article will be continued next week.)

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THE SECOND MR. CHESTERTON

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

THE EDITORS of the *Queen's Work* are suggesting that Chesterton's place in the world of letters is waiting for some young sodalist. Chesterton has gone home. But his vast audience lingers on. "Then step out and up," they urge young authors, "and seize the audience while you may." I do not know who the second Mr. Chesterton will be. But this I do know: he will come bearing fire. He will kindle a blaze that will destroy forever the controversial rubbish of four centuries and burn away the dry rot that today conceals the tomb of Catholicism's greatest treasures. He will aid us in the desperate fight to regain our lost Catholic leadership. He will speak of Christ in the language of the man in the street.

I hope with all my heart that the second Mr. Chesterton will strike the authentic Catholic note, *Laudate Domine,* in all his writings, strike it frequently, strike it hard, strike it until it echoes and reechoes down the gaunt dismal canyons of our large cities and surges out to awaken new life in the vast materialistic desert of America, strike it with all the dynamic power of a vigorous personality until he hears it—as G. K. is now, perhaps, hearing it—thundering and roaring and reverberating through the high vaults of heaven.

We already possess a sufficient number of writers who give us the thrice-told tale of little Nellie dropping holy cards into the butcher boy's delivery basket, thereby achieving the immediate conversion of hosts of people. We have an ample number of experts on the tariff, inflation, the League of Nations, industrial relations, peace, temperance, Communism, Fascism, atheism; but we do not have nearly enough young journalists who will speak to us of the things of God, who can present the inner truths of Catholicism without stammering.

The second Mr. Chesterton will possess an incomparable advantage over the pagan journalist. He will derive this superiority from his membership in the Mystical Body of Christ. His life will be lived, not upon the natural, but the supernatural plane. He will view local, national and world affairs from an eminence that is very close to heaven and only next door to hell. He will have, at all times, access to truth.

Dust storms in the Middle West are as nothing compared to the artificially created dust storms in the intellectual world today. Standards of judgment have been so completely shattered that public opinion, mobilized instantly in support of any given cause by press and radio, veers as quickly as a weather-cock in a gale. The world-wide conspiracy against truth has never been more brazenly or more heavily subsidized. Ministers of propaganda and public enlightenment have never been more ruthless or more cunning. Censorships have never been more severe. Freedom of expression has never been more hampered and fettered. Only the Catholic journalist who lives in Christ, as Christ lives in him, can laugh at press dictators and propagandists. Three avenues of truth—one natural and two supernatural—are always open to him.

Sufficient attention has not been paid to the amazing phenomenon of the centuries-old ability of the Church, however oppressed and persecuted, to communicate with its members. The Pope once ruled the Christian world from the catacombs. It is conceivable that Peter may again return to some subterranean hiding-place. But the Mass will be celebrated and the faithful will always be informed when and where it is being celebrated. If the Church could successfully defy the mighty bureaucracy of the pagan Roman Empire and circumvent the superb watchfulness of the Roman legions, it need not concern itself very much with the crude despotisms of our day. No one has yet explained just how an encyclical which assailed Nazi philosophy was recently received in Germany and read in all the Catholic pulpits of the country. With the exception of *Voelkische Beobachter,* official Nazi organ, the whole German press was not permitted to make any reference to the document. For two thousand years the Church of Christ has been a persecuted Church. When Herr Goebbels has lived two thousand years, he may begin to understand something of the Vatican's marvellous communication system.

Much has been written concerning the persecution of the Church in Spain. Very little has been said about the sufferings of the members of the Mystical Body in this country as the direct result of the European crisis. If one part of the Body suffers, Saint Paul tells us, the whole Body suffers. The Catholic journalist, therefore, as a member of the Catholic organism, is made aware of certain world events in a supernatural manner. If every propaganda agancy in the world bombarded him with information that nothing of any consequence was happening in Spain, he would immediately recognize the lie. Again, if every natural medium of communication suddenly broke down, he would still know that the Church in Spain is in torment. The best of us, the contemplatives and

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the saints, suffer most. But all members of the Body in this country are in pain. There is no natural explanation for our long periods of depression, our restlessness, our impatience, our excessive irritability, our desire for mortification, our sighs and lamentations, our sleepless nights, our sudden visits to a church, our acute recognition of the hovering presence of unspeakable evil.

There is yet a third way of arriving at truth. It is blasphemy to assert that the same God who spoke to the children of Israel is silent today. The Catholic journalist learns to write by prayer and writing. His best articles are not written at his desk—even though he labors all through the night. He may string words together until his fingers are numb, until needle-points of light dance before tired eyes, until his throat is parched, until he feels that his head will split open. But his very best work is done in the presence of Christ. I am not suggesting that the second Mr. Chesterton will move his desk into the nearest chapel or cathedral. But I do hope that, upon his knees before the tabernacle, he will discuss the article or short story he has in mind with the lonely Prisoner upon the distant altar. He will ask questions. He will listen. Too many of our writers are incessantly talking. They have forgotten how to listen. If they do not listen, how shall Christ speak to them? If they ignore Truth, how shall they write truth?

The second Mr. Chesterton will not be, of course, the Almighty's special oracle. Some of his manuscripts will be rejected. He will then know that Christ did not need his article or short story in a particular magazine at that precise moment of time. Perhaps later—perhaps not at all. A manuscript is essentially a prayer which is offered to God as a free gift. Whether it is published or not is of slight consequence. The second Mr. Chesterton will make mistakes—many mistakes. But he will know that Christ will accept and bless his imperfect journalism and somehow fit it into the Divine scheme of things. Of all journalists now writing, the Catholic journalist has peace of heart. He stands serene, confident and unafraid amid all the revolutionary hurly-burly of this critical hour.

The second Mr. Chesterton will be an optimist —in the truest sense of that much abused term. He will take a long-range Catholic view of things. He will perceive the essential irony of life in this vale of tears. Millions of words have been written about contemporary dictators, but few have suggested that Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini are, in reality, serving the mysterious purposes of God. However much we may dislike them, they do have a place in the Divine economy of things. However much they may depart from Christian ideals and precepts, however much they may strive to impose a totalitarian government upon their people, the designs of God are not thwarted and the inevitable recovery of the Christian spirit is somehow achieved.

Belloc has asked us to consider how the Syrian drama of 1,500 years unfolded, act by act, to its climax. Egyptian tyrants, Persian tyrants, Assyrian tyrants, the bare survival of Israel, the Kingdom restored, a Herod "living on till the opening of a new day wherein was consummated in a world now one, and in a Jerusalem now frontier town of Rome, that Sacrifice whereby this same newly united world was to be rekindled and transformed." If all this be but a blind sequence, he concludes, never was chance more like design.

The second Mr. Chesterton will carefully consider how tyrants and atheists today are laboring, all unwillingly and unconsciously, to rekindle the Christian spirit everywhere. The pain which we are experiencing in this country as the direct result of the Civil War in Spain can only be assuaged by adoration or by serving Christ in the least of our brethren. There is no other alleviation. We must practise Catholicism or go mad. What we are experiencing is being experienced, in like manner, by millions of Catholics throughout the world. It should not surprise us, therefore, if the rampant atheism in Spain should produce a resurgent Catholicism elsewhere. Those unleashed Christian forces, sweeping onward from country to country, may eventually reach Spain and result in the salvation of that martyred country.

Hitler is persecuting the Church and Jewry. What has been the most obvious result? Catholics, at the risk of concentration camp, are secretly carrying milk and provisions to the children and families of starving Jewish merchants. Jewish relief committees are aiding Catholic refugees. By means of Greek philosophy and Roman policy, the human mind in Europe, as Professor Flint has emphasized, rose to an apprehension of a bond of unity between all mankind independent of class and national distinction. The second Mr. Chesterton will point out that the contemporary era of dictators may well be but a necessary prelude to a new and great advance in the direction of the unity of all men, Jew and Gentile alike, in Christ's Mystical Body.

The second Mr. Chesterton will declare war against the so-called liberal Catholic who perceives so many aspects of any given problem that he is powerless to act. Since Catholicism is the supreme issue in the world today, his reactions will be instinctive. When his brethren in any part of the world are in desperate need, he will try to help them. When the Church is calumniated, he will defend it. When the Church is anywhere attacked, he will fight. When the Vatican issues an order, he will not debate it but obey. He will have no part in criticizing either the hierarchy or the clergy.

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Why is it that we invariably wait until we are presented with a *fait accompli* before bestirring ourselves to effective action? The second Mr. Chesterton will join forces with those journalists who refuse to accept the rôle of mere passive chronicler or commentator. The direction and guidance of national affairs is always being snatched from our hands. Nothing apparently remains to us but the right to condemn what a bit of preventive action would have obviated altogether. Ten months ago we heard of the first sit-down strike in Europe. We are only now passing judgment on the morality of this strike weapon while, in the words of H. A. Frommelt, we "permit American labor to be led by erroneous and ill-advised leaders into their present sorry state where the employment of such a weapon as the sit-down strike is necessary." We certainly have not been conspicuous in organizing Catholic employers and workers into parish study groups.

Our lost Catholic leadership will not be regained by continually finding fault with an economic order that we are too lazy to change or modify. The second Mr. Chesterton, I sincerely hope, will give us no peace until we take the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI out of cellophane and apply them in the home, the community and the nation.

TO THE ROOTS OF COURT REFORM

By MICHAEL COLLINS

THERE has been ample discussion of the President's proposal to enlarge the Supreme Court, as stated by Mr. Sands in THE COMMONWEAL of April 16, but most of it has been piecemeal treatment. What most of us need, I believe, is a logical outline which will assist us in seeing the question whole; and since no one else seems thus far to have put his hand to it, I should like to have a try at it myself.

First. I take it that no one will question the fact that the American system of government is one of delegated powers. In the Constitution (which includes, of course, its amendments) the people have ceded certain powers to the federal government; all others are reserved to the people. It is permissible to hold that this system needs revision; but it *is* the present system.

Second. In the Constitution the people have determined the form of the federal government: a legislative branch to make laws within the limits of the delegated powers; an executive branch to execute the laws within the limits of the delegated powers; and a judicial branch to see that the laws passed and executed are within the limits of the delegated powers. The Supreme Court of the United States is thus a curb on the legislative and executive branches. One might hold that under our system of checks and balances the legislative and executive should likewise be permitted to curb the Supreme Court; but that is to say that they should be allowed to curb their curb, which would be to nullify it. Otherwise, why Art. I, Sec. 3, which provides life tenure and irreducible pay for all justices of the Supreme Court? Here again one may hold that the system needs alteration; but this system was established by the people, and can be changed only by the people. It is true that one of the powers delegated by the people, by necessary implication, is the determination of the number of justices on the Supreme Bench; and technically, therefore, the legislative and executive have the power to predetermine decisions of the Supreme Court by packing it. Yes, this right is in the letter of the Constitution; but surely it is not in its spirit. If the people established the Supreme Court to be a curb on the legislative and executive it is not plausible that they meant to give the legislative and the executive the power to dominate it. Let us not use legalistic technicalities to nullify the expressed and written will of the people.

Third. The "will of the people" as expressed in the Constitution is the will of a people who lived under different conditions and who in any event are now long dead. The dead hand of the past should not be permitted to restrain the people of the present from securing necessary social reforms. True! The "will of the people" as expressed in the Constitution may not be the will of the people today—it almost certainly is not, as respects certain legislation desired by the present administration. But a presidential election, by however overwhelming odds, is not a mandate to change the Constitution—and doubly so when it was not an issue in the election. That should come, and would come I am sure, if an amendment were offered to the people.

Fourth. But suppose the Supreme Court palpably and harmfully errs in squaring legislation with the Constitution, curtailing the powers of the legislative and executive more than the people intended. (It is charged that this has happened, and I agree.) Have the legislative and executive the power to remedy this situation, to cure their own curb? The power to cure is here the power to curb, so I say they have not. That is one of the powers reserved to the people, to be exercised, if necessary, by amending the Constitution.

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Fifth. But it is alleged that under the Constitution the people cannot promptly assert their will in such a contingency, the amending process requiring so much time; and that the situation with regard to amendment is further aggravated by the difficulty in securing agreement on the wording of an amendment. This is partly true, undoubtedly; though it is not as bad as some would have us believe. Of the eleven amendments adopted since the Bill of Rights, seven were ratified in less than a year after their passage by Congress, and only two (the 14th and 16th) took more than fifteen months. If it be argued that the rub is the time required for passage by Congress, might it not be supposed that an amendment could be passed just about as quickly as the judiciary proposal itself? I should think so. But at any rate, the question is this: Is the need for greater legislative freedom so immediate and pressing as to warrant tampering with our fundamental system? It might be! In February, Monsignor John A. Ryan said: "In my opinion, the hostile elements (all the corporate wealth of the country and . . . all the believers in an extreme doctrine of states' rights) . . . would be able to delay final ratification [of a constitutional amendment] for at least three years. By that time, the operation of unchecked economic forces would in all probability have increased the number of the unemployed to 12,000,000 or 14,000,000 and plunged the country into a new and more devastating industrial depression. As I see it, the potential emergency which the country faces today is as grave as was the actual emergency of the early months of 1933." And certainly it would be better momentarily to wink at a partial violation of the established system of government than to let formal and meticulous observance of the system carry us again into such a chaotic condition, which might and probably would mean the wreck of the whole system. Better to sacrifice a part than the whole! But this gives rise to the question: Is our situation as desperate as Monsignor Ryan then believed, and if so, does the President's judiciary proposal offer a way out?

Sixth. Is our situation as desperate as indicated in the quotation from Monsignor Ryan? Since he made that statement, the Supreme Court has held that the Washington Minimum Wage Law was constitutional, and has passed on the five history-making cases affecting the Wagner Labor Act. With the states free to pass minimum wage laws, and with labor's right to organization and to collective bargaining assured by the Wagner Act, it seems somewhat more likely that we might get through even another three years without running into "a new and more devastating industrial depression." Besides, the three years required for ratification is only a guess, and one that seems very much open to doubt in the light of the history of prior amendments, as stated above. Furthermore, we do not know that some of the other desired legislation might not be validated if revised and resubmitted, as happened in the case of the Frazier-Lemke Act. Perhaps we could not have precisely the kind of legislation we ultimately desire, but in the light of recent Supreme Court decisions it seems likely we could have something sufficiently approaching it to serve as a stop-gap until an amendment could be ratified. The judiciary proposal is only a stop-gap itself.

Seventh. Does the President's proposal offer a way out? Just what legislation will enlargement of the Court make possible, which does not seem possible now? The present administration has received eleven adverse decisions from the Supreme Court: (1) NRA; (2) AAA; (3) wage and hour regulations of the Guffey Soft Coal Act; (4) federal regulation of "hot oil" shipments; (5) conversion of building and loan associations to federal charters when opposed by states; (6) original Farm Mortgage Moratorium Act; (7) original Railway Pension Act; (8) Municipal Bankruptcy Act; and (9-11) three others, lelating to AAA processing taxes, the dismissal of William E. Humphrey, and a minor aspect of the SEC Act, which are of little or no general consequence. Number 6 was revised and held unconstitutional on subsequent review. Unless some of the present members of the Court who are over seventy would retire, and provided they have not changed their views, the addition of six new justices would not change the decisions in numbers 1, 4 and 5. Numbers 2 and 3 could be upheld only if five of the six new members voted affirmatively—and the President insists that the new members will not be hand-picked to support any particular legislative measures. And even numbers 7 and 8 would require four favorable votes from the six new members. So if the proposal offers a way out, at least it is not a very certain way out; and the difference between the chances of passing a revised NRA, AAA, etc., through the present Court, and the chances of passing them through an enlarged Court, is a very small difference indeed. Is it worth tampering with the fundamental basis of our present system of government? I think not; and it seems to me that the question of whether it has ever been done before is irrelevant—a bad act is not justified by a bad precedent.

Let me conclude with a quotation from Washington's Farewell Address: "If in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed."

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WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL LAW?[1]

By JOHANNES MATTERN

RECURRING wars and dissensions have proved treaty provisions impermanent. Attempts have been made to apply the method of international conferences for the amelioration of the rigors of war, and, what is more, for the prevention of war. The Declaration of Paris of 1856 attempted to regulate certain aspects of maritime warfare. The Geneva Conference of 1864, later known as the Red Cross Convention, dealt particularly with the treatment by belligerents of sick and wounded prisoners. The Declaration of St. Petersburg of 1868 forbade the use of explosive bullets. The arbitration, in 1872, of the Alabama claims growing out of the American Civil War offered a promising precedent for the settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

In 1899, the Czar of all the Russians called an international conference to consider limitation of armaments. Representatives of twenty-six nations met at The Hague, among them the United States. On the subject of disarmament no agreement could be reached, but some rules were adopted for the conduct of war. The Conference came to be known as the First International Peace Conference of The Hague. At the Second Conference which met in 1907, with forty-four states represented, the provisions of the First Conference were enlarged. The creation of a Permanent Court of International Justice was frustrated by the failure of the states represented to agree upon a plan for the election of the judges. A third conference was to have taken place about the time the European War broke out.

In the elaboration of the Hague conventions the signatory powers agreed "before an appeal to arms . . . to have recourse, as far as circumstances allow, to the good offices or mediation of one or more friendly powers." They recommended that "in disputes of an international nature involving neither honor nor vital interests," the parties should "as far as circumstances allow, institute an international commission of inquiry to facilitate a solution of these differences. . . ." Finally the contracting powers "reserve to themselves the right of concluding new agreements . . . with a view to extending compulsory arbitration to all cases which they may consider it possible to submit to it." But it was precisely the cases exempted, the cases involving national honor and vital interest, which required mediation, inquiry and arbitration, for they are the very issues most likely to lead to war. It was these issues which Secretary of State Bryan sought to draw within the sphere of arbitrable disputes in his so-called Conciliation or Peace Treaties of which about twenty were perfected and ten signed but not completed in 1913 and 1914. In these treaties every signatory pledged itself to its co-signatory that all disputes between them, "of every nature whatsover," be referred for investigation and report to a permanent International Commission.

The Bryan treaties were concluded between the United States and each of the thirty countries in question. They did not cover the disputes underlying the European War. These disputes involving national honor and vital interests were, in complete compatibility with the Hague Conventions, "settled" by war. In the course of the war both sides to the conflict evaded and violated every solemnly pledged rule of warfare which stood in their way of securing an advantage over the enemy. Each side called upon world opinion to condemn the transgressions of the other, offering hypocritical justifications of its own violations as reprisals for prior offenses of the opponent. World opinion was divided as were the warring factions. On one point, however, it was fairly agreed: The whole system of man-made international law, elaborated and pledged in sporadic conferences and ratified by the constitutional agencies of sovereign states, was a tragic failure. Clearly, a new system of creating international law with a better prospect of compliance with the rules pledged, had to be devised.

This opinion crystallized in a series of different approaches to the difficult problem. There were those who reasserted that international law, as all law, to be effective, must have a lawgiver superior to man, and an interpreter and dispenser of the law sanctioned by divine authority. Others admitted the need for a divinely given law of nations but were willing to dignify human reason, rightly employed, with the task of interpretation and applications. Still others saw the only hope for an effective international law in the concise provisions of treaties and conventions as positive international law in the same sense in which constitutional and statutory law of the sovereign state are considered as positive national law. The approach of this group is not necessarily inconsistent with a belief in the existence of moral standards deducible from a law of nature; the group simply insists that such moral standards require unequivocal definition in the form of positive international legal enactments, with a practical machinery for their enforcement analogous to the

[1] This is the conclusion of an article begun in last week's issue.

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enforcing agencies of positive state law. It was this group which prevailed at the end of the war in the creation of the League of Nations, its Covenant, and Permanent Court of International Justice.

The analogy of the new international legal system to the legal organization of the sovereign state raised the question of the nature of the League of Nations. Was the League to be a superstate and as such the sovereign lawgiver to its member states, just as the individual sovereign state in the past has been the sovereign lawgiver to its citizens? Or was it to be, as the name implied, merely a league in which the member states exercised their historic sovereignty in assenting or refusing to assent to particular provisions of the proposed Covenant? The question was a vital one, for it raised the further query whether international or state law was to be the superior law.

A respectable group of international jurists on the European continent, with a strong following in England and America, supported the view of the superstate nature of the League and of the superiority of international law over the law of the states. To be consistent, they were forced to deny the sovereign character of the individual states, at least in their relations to other states. In this denial they had in their favor as a presumption of right the fact that hardly a single modern state is economically self-sufficient to the extent that it can pursue a foreign policy completely devoid of consideration of the rights and needs of other states.

But an examination of the League Covenant and of the behavior of the controlling members of the League does not justify the assumption that the League was considered by its founders as a superstate, nor that the member states consider the law of the Covenant superior to their state law. Membership in the League is voluntary and subject to cancellation at the will of the member state, as is membership in the Permanent Court of International Justice. As voluntary members, the states agree to accept a majority decision of the Assembly and, as far as is stipulated a unanimous decision of the Council. But the unanimity rule in the Council means no more and no less than that the fathers of the League provided in it a method of preventing a decision considered incompatible with the honor and vital interest of the individual sovereign state, and that in the very instance when a decision is most needed. This fact assumes special significance when it is realized that the members of the Council are the powers shaping the course of international events.

To be sure, the member states of the League are pledged to respect and to preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League. Japan, as a member of the League, has violated the territorial integrity of China, also a member of the League. Japan has withdrawn from the League as a protest against the criticism of the powerful members of the League. Italy, a member of the League, has violated the territorial integrity and existing political independence of Ethiopia, also a member state. Italy did not withdraw from the League, despite open criticism in Council and Assembly. Germany has withdrawn from the League and by unilateral action has repudiated one provision after the other of the Treaty of Versailles, though the Covenant provides for the revision of existing treaties by collateral action of the League, i. e., by action the victor states have refused to apply though requested by Germany as a League member.

Not even in the measures designed to hold would-be disturbers of the peace to account does the League approximate the status of an agency superior to the member states. Yes, the League provides emergency steps to be taken by Assembly and Council for the preservation of peace in case of war or a threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the members of the League or not. It provides for the submission to arbitration of cases of disputes which the members recognize to be suitable for arbitration. In case a rupture is not submitted to arbitration, the members agree to submit the matter to the Council. They agree that they will not go to war against the party accepting the Council's decision when the Council reaches a report which is unanimously agreed to by its members, other than the parties to the dispute. If the Council fails to reach such a report, the members of the League reserve to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice. What is right and justice is, of course, to be decided by each individual member reserving to itself the right to take action.

In the shadows of the failures of the past, what is real international law? The provisions of the Covenant, evaded and violated with impunity by states in or out of the League? Or the actions of the states evading and violating these provisions with the tacit consent or the half-hearted censure of the powerful members of the League? When state law is violated, failure to punish is frowned upon by public opinion. Yet violations of international law are, as a rule, not punished. Successful violation of international law is a source of pride for the violator and the envy of many eager for the chance to do likewise.

It must be clear that little can be expected from the statesmen. What then can the people do? Each individual must, first of all, manifest his determination to contend for an international law worthy of acceptance and compliance with the same tenacity with which he contends for national civic and public law worthy of respect

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and obedience. He must demonstrate his capacity for forcing acceptance and compliance of such an international law by the political agencies of the national states of which he is a part. As a practical proposition he can begin by voting or forcing out of office the dishonest politician who is ready to sacrifice his fellowman's son for the sake of position and power under the pretext of endangered national honor and interest. He can follow up this laudable start by treating with the deserved reproof the presumptuous propagandist who seeks to sell to the public, as an honest instrument for the solution of our international ills, the kind of League of Nations which is built upon wholesale plunder and which condones the despoliation of its own members by its own members, past and present.

He must not consider profits from the private manufacture of and trade in arms decent gain from honest business. He must not hold the view that the wealth of the natural resources of one nation and the poverty of the other allow of no adjustment by equitable exchange of goods and services, nor insist upon selling as much as possible abroad while refusing to buy from the purchaser. To be sure, there may not be enough men of this kind, which may well be the reason we have not accomplished more so far.

For today international law is that which the most powerful interests in self-satisfied and self-seeking states succeed in imposing upon the ill-informed, indifferent and helpless peoples of the earth. Let us hope that some day international law will be what an enlightened and determined population compels its governments to accept and obey. To realize such a hope, intelligent men must cease their passive lamentation of that which is; they must consecrate themselves to the active pursuit of what among human beings should be, an approximation of the ideal. To meet the failures of the past and the difficulties of the present with despair of the future would mean to decree the doom of the human race.

Whence Peace Shall Come

Where are the lambs that might well now be slain;
Whose blood upon the doors would be a plea
To stay the hand of wrath and make men see
The anguish lurking in the paltry gain
Of conquerors; the unrelenting pain
Of Might; the starving bodies that could be
The glory of a people who are free,
Now, mere debris of shells that fall like rain?
O world! come seek the Lamb Whose blood was shed,
And Which now fills a million golden bowls.
Come, sit around the table and be fed;
There is no dearth of food for hungry souls.
The Prince of Peace shall dwell among all men;
And lambs may lie within the lion's den.

SISTER MARY EULALIA.

FATHER DESMOND

ANONYMOUS

"THE REVEREND WILLIAM DESMOND, assistant pastor of St. Raymond's Catholic Church in Joliet, Illinois, and former Catholic Youth Organization leader in Chicago's stockyards district, was killed early today when his automobile bounded from an embankment, struck three posts and overturned on route 4 near Lockport."

He went into eternity suddenly, the young priest who for five years before being assigned to St. Raymond's in Joliet, worked in Chicago's supremely tough district, West 25th Place and Wallace Street. He was returning from a sick call when his car bounded from an embankment, struck three posts and overturned. . . . He lay there, alone, for some time. The roads were icy and traffic was light. His soul was before his Judge when they found him. Nearby was his breviary. In his hands he held his rosary which he always carried and recited when driving alone.

Thus William Clarence Desmond, priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, son of a policeman, and an ardent C. Y. O. worker, left this world.

In seminary days Bill Desmond was slated to be a priest-editor by his classmates. Vacations he was counsellor in the archdiocese boys' camp, and here his ability as a writer, editor and reporter were manifest. His scoops were awesome—and truthful. He had planned to write in his spare time when assigned to his first parish, All Saints; but with his coming, Guild Hall, the settlement house, was born, and there was no spare time. The dream to write still persisted, however, and, anticipating an hour to himself, he would get out his notes, when—"Telephone, Father Desmond," the housekeeper would call.

His work was with youth, preventive work; his charges were Chinese, Italian, Mexican, Sicilian and Irish. The rough-tough boys were invited into the Hall, a barracks of a place, but with Father Desmond there it became an alluring, inviting place: an old deserted church in the heart of Chicago's melting-pot.

"Fadder," as the youngsters called him, was as fearless as they come. One day I called at the hall in reference to some work we had to do with the older girls, and as he had some children to see in the next block, I accompanied him. We were scarce outside the Hall when a Chinese, gun in hand, ran out of an alley across the street, closed his eyes and whirled round and round, firing the gun! Father roared at him. The gun dropped and the man ran, with Father after him. Pursuer and pursued vanished into an open doorway. I waited, then went back to the rectory for Fathers Doody and O'Connor. Father Desmond was unconscious, but showing signs of coming to. He opened his eyes, smiled, and said: "That Chink that beaned me has a powerful wallop. I must get him for my club." And he did! Months later we learned a second Chinese, armed with a two-by-four, had struck Father as he came through the doorway.

Father's desire was to better his charges. When his older girls began to chafe under their environment he

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came to me and asked: "Could we use your school for a girls' club?" He could and did, and so I learned to know well the tall, handsome, third-generation Irish lad whose impulse ever carried him beyond his reason; a lad whose dream centered around a Figure on the Cross; a lad with a brilliant mind, an easy gift for friendship, a gift of winning souls.

In the terribly lean days of 1929, Guild Hall was used as a food and clothes distribution center. When Father talked to the clients he was one of them, and they knew he was their friend, advisor, the link between them and God.

Many a time I sat in his office while he did his work. A Mexican woman, be-shawled, spoke: "Padre, my Lupie will not go to Mass." An Italian father next: "Joe stays out late nights." A back-of-the-yards Irish woman: "Kay is driving her father and me crazy with her airs, Father."

Father was equal to all demands. "Father Desmond," folks said respectfully, tenderly. . . . *Father Desmond.*

"Twenty-nine calls for you, Father Bill," said Teresa, the housekeeper at All Saints rectory.

"Only twenty-nine, Teresa?"

"The phone rang after that but I didn't answer. I have to get the work done."

When he transferred his older group from All Saints Guild Hall to my school (one of the finest private non-sectarian schools in the Middle West) he came to this meetings, always after ten, for Guild Hall kept him busy until then. Assistant pastors in Chicago do not have ther own cars, so he rode the bus or the street-car. And after the meeting he invariably walked a block to St. Ambrose rectory at 1012 East 47th Street, to visit with his seminary classmate, Father Thomas Reed, for boys will be boys, and Father Desmond entered quietly so as not to disturb that dean of all pastors, Right Reverend William E. Foley, a former overseas chaplain, and my former pastor.

"If I could follow Bill's mind for one day," said Father Reed, who also wrote when there was time, "I would have material to keep me going for a year. His imagination is wonderful and his clinches are superb."

Clinches—that expresses it. Father Desmond never missed them. His approach was subtle, but always in the open. He knew every settlement resident in Chicago, the head of every private school; and because he was Father Desmond, and so utterly selfless, many a dean took in absolutely without charge a girl, and sometimes two and three, from his parish, All Saints.

I point with pride to girls sent me by Father—and often he was sheepish as a little boy caught stealing jam about the number he sent me—for they hold positions of trust and honor today.

"When the girls grow older and their earning power increases," he said to me, "they tire of Guild Hall and yearn for swank. To hold them together it is necessary to provide other club houses."

Our school was "swank"—wholly non-Catholic and extremely biased. The owner was the hardest old man in the state, and the most bigoted. When he learned I opened our unused rooms to a Catholic club two nights a week, he was nigh apoplectic, and I feared he would expel me. But when he met Father Desmond he changed his mind, as so many did after meeting the young priest. "Prove the Virgin Birth" and "Prove the Crucifixion is not a myth," the old man would say to Father, and Father's answers convinced the hard old man to such an extent he asked to be instructed, and was baptized.

. . . Tomorrow Father Desmond will be buried from St. Brendan's, in Chicago, his home parish, where his parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Desmond, have lived all their married life. Both their sons—Father William and Father John—attended St. Brendan's parochial school. Their father, Con Desmond, has been a policeman for years.

When Father Desmond was at All Saints his room looked like a newspaper office at edition time. "And when will you pick up your papers, Father Bill"—he had warned her not to touch them—"so I can clean your room?" the housekeeper asked.

And it was the same when he went to St. Raymond's, in Joliet. He would get out his notes, strew them handily about, sit at his typewriter, and—"A man to see you, Father," or, "Telephone call, Father," would curtail the writing.

Up in heaven there will be time to write the story he had been planning to write, and Mary, heaven's housekeeper, will not mind papers on the floor. She was accustomed to shavings and sawdust when she was on earth. What a story it will be!

Or is it left for us to write? Is it our task to tell of the young priest who lived thirty-three years, mostly in Chicago, never thinking of self, never too tired to hearten a sick soul? Shall we tell of his good deeds, tell of his parents, his only brother (Father John) and his friends who are legion? Or shall we tell of the rich tenor voice that often flooded our music room as he played his own accompaniment to the rollicking words of "Hogan's Goat," the sixteen-verse song, and he knew every verse!

Thirty-three years on earth in His service. Lord, be merciful. . . .

Public Tulips

The tulips stand embattled in the city square
In ranks of scarlet and columns of rainy mauve,
Flanked by wire, commanded by strategic trees
That put forth faint green leaves in the gasoline air.
The tulips march toward the sun breaking through the grove
Of buildings. Here the Sunday public takes its ease.
Children, like tulips, lift their faces to the sky;
Old men squat on the hard stone benches and regard
A sparrow swooping for joy. Sweaty babies cry
And twist in their mother's arms. Although life is hard
With wailing babies and thin wages, lovers stroll
Enraptured through the crowds as if they were alone.
Around the throngs motor cars whizz and street-cars toll;
Beyond them rise crags where they work and dwell in stone.
They have poured from towers and tenements to fill
This little clearing; they laugh, cry, spit, yawn and sing.
Today is Sunday; offices and lofts are still;
Some tulips and a sparrow constitute their spring.

MARIE LUHRS.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—It is reported that Pope Pius XI's residence at Castel Gandolfo has not benefited his health as much as was hoped. However, the Holy Father has continued to hold audiences at his summer residence. May 31 is Pius XI's eightieth birthday and all churches in the Archdiocese of New York will celebrate a solemn Mass of thanksgiving the day before. * * * On Pentecost Sunday, May 16, more than sixty priests delivered special sermons on vocations to the priesthood and the religious life in various churches throughout the Diocese of Albany. * * * Over 15,000 persons attended a three-day exhibit of books, art, periodicals and liturgical objects at the Regional Seminary at Hungialow, near Tsinan, China, and thousands of leaflets were distributed. * * * In an article, "What Does the Negro Want?" in the *Interracial Review,* Beatrice M. Murphy lists: equal educational and vocational opportunities for his children; "all the economic, political and civic privileges which are the right of any law-abiding citizen of this country," and on breaking the law "justice without discrimination"; "to be able to worship God whenever and wherever he likes"; to be free from discrimination at operas, concerts, theatres and "to make his own place in the field of art and literature and music." * * * More than 5,000 priests and Sisters use the Co-op Parish Activities Service of Effingham, Ill. Among the facilities supplied are material for recreation, magic lanterns and motion pictures, various aids to visual instruction, cooperative buying and cooperative printing. Patronage dividends are distributed in accordance with consumer cooperative practise. * * * The *Pittsburgh Catholic* reports that Archbishop Stritch of Milwaukee has a policy of "union labor only" on the building of churches in his archdiocese. It quotes Archbishop Stritch to the effect that "such a policy is but following out the spirit of the teachings of the Church. Less than seven weeks ago Pope Pius reiterated the official stand of the Church on the right of the workingman to organize and bargain collectively within the limits of justice that they might obtain wages sufficient for the decent support of themselves and their families."

The Nation.—The raising of a $15,000,000 fund to expand the Boys Clubs of America was urged by former President Herbert Hoover, recently elected chairman of the organization. * * * A temporary injunction granted by a federal judge last December against the Tennessee Valley Authority was dissolved by the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals. TVA was thus authorized to proceed with the government's large electric power program in six states. * * * Returning from a successful world sugar conference, the American representation's head, Norman H. Davis, discounted the possibilities of a disarmament conference at present. * * * Nebraska's unicameral legislature concluded its first session with its members agreeing that "our work has been good, but not sensational." * * * The Civil Service Commission reported 829,193 were on federal payrolls as of April 1. This figure was the highest since the World War when it stood at 917,760 on November 11, 1918. * * * After protracted conferences between administration representatives and farm leaders, agreement was reached on a new farm-relief program estimated to cost between $700,000,000 and $800,000,000 a year. The program employs the principle of flexible tariffs on agricultural imports in addition to guaranteeing farmers and consumers stabilized prices for standard foods and fibers. * * * The State Department informed the French government that the Commerce Department of the United States would not permit the proposed transatlantic air race which was projected to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Lindbergh flight. The "race element," the department ruled, tended to destroy any safety factors. * * * The Supreme Court upheld a Louisiana state tax on chain stores. The tax was levied on chains operating stores above a fixed number not based on those within the state but operated anywhere. The decision will have far-reaching effect on such stores if Louisiana's procedure is followed by other states. * * * The new German Ambassador, Dr. Hans H. Dieckhoff, who succeeds Dr. Hans Luther in Washington, presented his credentials to President Roosevelt. * * * Participation of fifty-nine nations in the New York World's Fair for 1939 was announced by Grover Whalen, the Fair's president, on his return from Paris where he had made formal application in favor of the Fair to the Bureau of International Expositions.

The Wide World.—Heavy fighting on the Basque front brought no signal victory to either side, although the march on Bilbao was not halted. The objectives were primarily mountain peaks and towns outside the main line of the city's fortifications. A very considerable number of refugees, mostly children, were removed to France and England. Efforts were made to prove that German aviators were serving in the Mola armies. The Valencia government was reorganized. Juan Negrin, a Socialist, succeeded Largo Caballero as Premier. The C.N.T. (Anarcho-Syndicalist trade union) was not represented. The Catalonian government announced that an "offensive movement" would seek to relieve pressure on Bilbao. A British destroyer, the Hunter, was damaged while on patrol duty, presumably as a result of having struck a floating mine. * * * Efforts to modify current relationships with Great Britain were made during the week by both Italy and Germany. In Rome, Count Ciano delivered a conciliatory address, and from Berlin came the news that an offer of friendship might soon be made. The new British ambassador extended an oratorical olive branch. * * * Following the abrupt dismissal of Marshal Tukhachevsky, generally regarded as one of Russia's ablest military commanders, the Soviet govern-

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ment announced the formation of War Councils in each army district. These are made responsible to Commissar Voroshilov, and are said to insure coordination of the military and political commands. * * * A revolt broke out in southern Albania, but apparently the rebels were able to seize only one town. The government announced that the rest of the country was under control. Austrian circles believed the uprising was anti-Italian. * * * The German government exerted renewed pressure on religious groups. Catholics in number have been brought to trial on charges of immorality and treason. Brother Donatus, of Fulda, who wrote a number of letters to American friends on conditions in Germany, has been heard by the People's Court. The preparatory seminary at Heiligenstadt, Thuringia, has been closed on the ground that immorality was rampant. Confessional Protestant clergymen, too, have been the victims of renewed attacks. Many new dismissals and restrictions have been reported. * * * Renewed outbursts of violence against Jews was reported from Warsaw and other Polish cities. One of the disturbances grew out of the stabbing of a policeman in the town of Brzesc. * * * From Paris came the report that Jacques Doriot has acquired *La Liberté*. This former Communist deputy, now a Fascist, is unquestionably one of the truly redoubtable men of France.

* * * *

Another "Must" Program.—Returning to Washington from vacation, President Roosevelt summoned waiting congressional leaders to the White House and delivered to them a 1937 "must" program. He insisted that the relief appropriation figure remain at $1,500,000, the amount he originally recommended. House action indicated that the economy wave in Congress would not override administration insistence. Mr. Roosevelt made explicit that he had no intention to compromise on his Court Reform Proposal, wth Postmaster General Farley reiterating White House belief in the plan's eventual victory by retorting to interviewers: "Why compromise?" A "layman's" budget balance for the fiscal year 1938, with an actual equalization of the treasury's income and expenditure, was still firmly advocated. On this point, Mr. Roosevelt did not recommend any particular economy measure but he did ask for a continuing resolution which would extend for two years or more the present manufacturers' excise and "nuisance" taxes. Three other legislative acts completed the list. The first called for legislation providing an integrated power policy (Representative Bankhead interpreted this as several more TVA's), including a long-range program for soil conservation, flood control, navigation and hydroelectric development on major watersheds. This program will, however, call for little additional expenditure for the next year. The second was an act regulating maximum hours and minimum wages of labor and prohibition of child labor in interstate commerce. The third was a farm tenancy program starting the federal government on a permanent plan for solution of this problem. A modest expenditure, probably not exceeding $10,000,000, would be made for the first year. In face of the President's program leaders in Congress predicted that their continuous sitting would extend the present session to mid-August. They found Mr. Roosevelt had on his "fighting clothes." Once before, in 1933, he returned from a vacation, and incited Congress to enact an even more lengthy series of "musts." Political commentators, however, point out that the situation today is very different: the President is no longer on his "honeymoon" and the Democrats are widely split on the Court issue.

For Spanish Relief.—Formally launching its campaign to raise funds for the relief of the innocent victims of the Spanish war, the American Committee for Spanish Relief held a mass meeting in New York's Madison Square Garden. The Committee, the first agency of its kind to register with the State Department under the recently enacted neutrality laws, announced that its funds would be spent wherever the need existed in Spain. Noncombatants will be aided through a representative, in such a rôle as Herbert Hoover played in Belgium, working in close cooperation with the Red Cross. Speakers at the meeting were as follows: E. Allison Peers, M.A., professor of Spanish in the University of Liverpool and author of "The Spanish Tragedy," who made a special trip to this country for the meeting; Pierre Crabitès, until recently the American representative on the Mixed Tribunal, Cairo, and author of "Unhappy Spain"; Reverend Bernard Grimley, D.D., editor of the London *Catholic Times;* Michael Williams, editor of THE COMMONWEAL; and Reverend Edward Lodge Curran, D.D., LL.D., president of the American Association against Communism. Basil Harris, chairman of the Committee, presided. A capacity audience found other interesting features on the program. "Democracy Imperiled: A Spanish Pageant," conceived by Leonard Feeney, S.J., and Albert I. Whelan, S.J., and starring Pedro de Cordoba, was enacted by actors of Father Conrad's "Veronica's Veil" company, supported by veterans and children. Music was furnished by combined choirs under the direction of Father Finn, conductor of the celebrated Paulist Choir.

The Supreme Court.—On the same day that the Senate Judiciary Committee voted ten to eight to report adversely the President's Court reform measure, Justice Willis Van Devanter resigned from the Supreme Court bench. Justice Van Devanter, who is seventy-eight, has served twenty-six years on the Court, having been appointed by President Taft. Always a conservative, he voted against the greater portion of the New Deal legislation, although since October his record has been only three against and nine for the administration measures. His resignation, effective after the present session ends on June 2, was made under the act of March 1, 1937, which provides for retirement with continuation of salary rather than a pension. Both Justice Van Devanter's resignation and the Senate Committee's action were hailed by foes of the Roosevelt Court plan as distinct victories. With Chief Justice Hughes and Justice Roberts showing new liberal tendencies, even certain friends of the President believe that his objective of bringing the Court closer

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into conformity with the times can be obtained without resorting to legislation. Compromise on the plan received less favor from opponents who are now determined to fight it to a finish in the Senate. Washington was rife with speculation as to Justice Van Devanter's successor. He will be Mr. Roosevelt's first appointment to the Supreme Court. Prominent among those mentioned for the post are Senators Robinson and Wagner, although they may be barred by an "informal rule" made recently by the President not to appoint to the judiciary anyone over sixty. Others mentioned are Solicitor General Stanley Reed, Assistant Attorney-General Robert Jackson, Professor Felix Frankfurter and James M. Landis, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Reports also persisted that other justices would resign before October, the names of Justices Brandeis and Sutherland being consistently to the front. The President, queried on the resignation and the Senate Committee's action, replied: "I have no news on that subject today."

The Dunnigan Bill.—Recent protests against indecent burlesque shows in New York (see recent issues of THE COMMONWEAL) were followed by passage of the Dunnigan bill by the state legislature on May 5. This measure enables the License Commissioner to revoke a permit to stage a play if charges justifying court action can be brought against it. During the time the case is pending, the license is to stand revoked. The press generally commented unfavorably, alleging that the power of censorship thus conferred on one man was excessive. On May 16, an audience of 1,500 persons were addressed in the New Amsterdam Theatre by several theatre people opposed to the Dunnigan plan. Those who spoke included Helen Hayes, George Middleton, Maurice Evans and James T. Brennan. A telegram from Eugene O'Neill was read. Miss Hayes contended that objectionable performances could be closed without such a measure, which she and her associates looked upon as menacing to the progress of the stage. The meeting petitioned Governor Lehman to veto the bill. The next day Monsignor Francis A. McIntyre, chancellor of the Archdiocese of New York, announced that the ordinary was supporting an endorsement of the proposed law as written by Joseph F. Lamb, Knights of Columbus official. Mr. Lamb contended that unless the Dunnigan bill became a law, New York would be without the power to rid itself of theatrical productions financed by "barons of vice." Catholic organizations and periodicals in number supported Monsignor McIntyre's declaration. Protests against the bill came from many sources, including the directors of the Independent Theatre Owners of America.

Aftermath of the Coronation.—King George VI and Queen Elizabeth having been duly crowned, England celebrated and reflected on the splendor of the occasion. There were innumerable humorous incidents. Beautiful things were kept in remembrance, too, including the spirited music of Mr. Vaughan Williams's "Te Deum." Elsewhere matters were less tranquil. In Dublin members of the Irish Republican party burned the British flag as a climax of marching and demonstrating. The government sanctioned no recognition of the event, and there was none. There was trouble in north Ireland too, but the major disturbance in Belfast was soon over. On March 13, the statue of King George II in St. Stephen's Green was practically demolished by an explosion. It was learned that a powerful mine had been planted some days earlier. Italy restricted its interest in the affair to an absolute minimum. Newspapers devoted a laconic line to the news. Meanwhile the Duke of Windsor and his bride came back into the news. Both were reported to have listened eagerly as the radio described the affair. What attitude the new rulers would take toward the marriage remained considerable of a mystery. It was rumored that serious disagreement prevailed, and that it had finally been decided that no member of the royal family would attend the wedding on June 3 at the Chateau de Cande.

Lord Snowden.—History will some time afford a currect impression of the "MacDonald era"—that strange time when Labour statesmen went around Europe talking cooperation and doing precious little to bring it about. It has been said of Mr. MacDonald that no man was ever in so many places where he should not have been, and absent from so many places where his presence was indispensable. But of Philip Snowden the historian can make the very next thing to a hero. He came out of very humble circumstances. He died the Viscount of Ickornshaw. Socialism was to him a program of reform entirely compatible with teaching the Bible in the manner of John Wesley and defending the balanced budget upon each and every occasion. His stanch pacifism was based on the sound view that workingmen could not possibly profit by such a war as that of 1914. He was an advocate of temperance who asserted that the British laborer drank because liquor alone made it possible for him to live. But his biggest achievements were identified with his service as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was a member of the MacDonald Cabinet of 1924, and startled the world by plumping for a sound budget. The way to improve the lot of the working classes was, he held, to keep the national finances in order while lowering the cost of living in every practicable way. He was also a member of the 1929 MacDonald Cabinet, which faced such crucial problems as war debt settlements and the solution of Germany's reparations difficulties. In both cases the British government was of a divided mind, and action came too slowly to solve the Gordian knot in an impressive way. Nevertheless Snowden earned a sound diplomatic reputation. Finally he entered the "national government" of 1931, but his insistence upon free trade led to his resignation. In 1935, he was attacking rearmament, but public opinion did not respond. He had triumphed over innumerable obstacles. In his early days he was fearfully poor; during most of his life he was a cripple; and sometimes he could have been termed England's most unpopular citizen.

Non-Catholic Religious Activities.—As the result of an informal conference of Catholic, Jewish and Protestant

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leaders at the Rhode Island College of Education, the state director of education is to appoint a commission to study the possibilities of introducing religious instruction in all the public schools of the state. John Davidson, elder of the Second Presbyterian Church of Providence, estimated that "the average Protestant church school gives the pupil only fourteen hours of instruction a year." At the dedication exercises of a new educational building of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd of Brooklyn, N. Y., Dr. Charles Trexler said of education, "Method is very important, but the objective which is character, must receive a still greater emphasis. This is the responsibility of the Church in a nation constituted as is our United States. . . . Instruction in the Sunday School with its limited and casual attendance is not enough. A thorough, well-planned system of conscientious religious instruction on weekdays as well as on Sundays will go far in developing the character which our young people need so greatly in meeting and overcoming the intricacies of modern life." * * * The Fides Service of Rome carried a transcript of General Chiang Kai-Shek's address to Protestant missionaries at Nanking, which told of his meditating on the Bible during his captivity and said in part, "Dr. Sun Yat-sen was a Christian and the great gift he received from Christ was a real love for the people coupled with the desire to ameliorate their lot. His spirit is ever with us. I began by placing my trust in Dr. Sun Yat-sen and in his mission, which seemed at first sight, at least, to be devoid of a definitely religious significance. But later I made another step forward and became a disciple of Jesus Christ. I now understand that when one is animated by faith one is ready to make the sacrifice of life itself rather than of one's principles." * * * Illinois clergymen are said to be heartily in favor of the Saltiel bill which has already passed the lower house, that provides for a compulsory physcal examination before marriage.

* * * *

"Balanced Abundance."—Raising the prices of the nation's agricultural commodities was one of the chief planks in New Deal economics. The principal device instigated in 1933, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, with its payments for curtailing production, was definitely based on "scarcity economics." Successive years of drought have led to a less short-sighted view on the part of the nation's farm leaders, and a new conception, credited to Secretary Henry A. Wallace, the "ever-normal granary" conception of biblical origin, has gradually taken form. A program was presented to Congress, May 17, after it had been agreed upon by administration and farm organization leaders. On the ground that it is to the interest of the nation as a whole to prevent wide fluctuation in the prices of farm commodities, it provides that loans will be granted in large crop years against stored supplies of corn, cotton, rice, tobacco and wheat, to farmers who agree to curtail their production to an extent as high as 20 percent, to be set by the Secretary of Agriculture. Farmers who do not sign these agreements will be subject to a tax of 66 2/3 percent in years when their failure to curtail would lower the domestic prices of these commodities. A parity price would be guaranteed to cooperating cotton growers for the proportion sold for domestic use, while the rest would go at the lower price of the world market. They would also receive diversion payments for turning cotton fields into legumes and grasses. As a further stabilizer of prices automatic tariff provisions would be enacted to maintain a parity based on the 1909-1914 purchasing power of these five commodities in terms of non-agricultural products. In the case of corn, for instance, the only commodity to which it would apply this year, the provisions would immediately result in the reduction of the duty on that commodity by $.25 a bushel. This new program embodies most of the provisions outlawed by the Supreme Court in the AAA and Bankhead Cotton Act decisions and even extends the powers granted to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Labor Relations.—Pittsburgh stole the spotlight from Hollywood as the organization of the nation's seven large independent steel producers proceeded. On May 14, the Jones and Laughlin Steel Company of that city signed an agreement with the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, the C.I.O. affiliate, to hold an election for 32,000 employees supervised by the National Labor Relations Board. Crucible Steel and Inland Steel of Chicago were said to be the next objectives of the organizers, followed by Youngstown Sheet and Tube and Republic Steel. The powerful Bethlehem Steel Corporation and the well-entrenched National Steel were to be left until the organizers were in a stronger position. Meanwhile the Republic Steel issued a letter to its 55,000 employees defending the open shop and on May 17 joined Youngstown Sheet and Tube in seeking a showdown now and threatening to close their mills until the workers were ready to return to them. The next day a Crucible Steel company-union asked for an election under the National Labor Relations Board as company officials and C.I.O. organizers conferred on a possible agreement. After a two-weeks meeting the American Ladies Garment Workers Union adjourned, giving unanimous backing to their affiliation with the C.I.O. and at the same time adopting a resolution urging the healing of the breach between C.I.O. and A.F. of L. Just before the opening of the campaign to organize 150,000 Ford workers Henry Ford sent a personal message to all his employees on the folly of unionism. He reiterated his charges on the connection between Wall Street and organized labor when he said, "A little group of those who control both capital and labor will sit down in New York and settle prices, dividends and wages." The press made much of "Fordisms," wisecracks directed at organized labor. The River Rouge plant with its 90,000 workers was the first objective of the United Automobile Workers of America. Union members all over the Detroit area were urged to cooperate by personal contacts in securing Ford members of the U.A.W. Mrs. Elinore M. Herrick, regional director of the National Labor Relations Board, ordered the Consolidated Edison Company and six subsidiaries to appear, June 1, on charges of violating the Wagner Act.

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The Play and Screen

The Prize Plays

THE CRITICS' CIRCLE has chosen Maxwell Anderson's "High Tor" as the finest American play of the year, and not only Mr. Anderson but the Critics' Circle is to be congratulated. It has given its award to an original and distinguished drama, and one which is peculiarly American. Even though it does not deal with city life, and yet is scarcely a folk-drama, "High Tor" is in setting and characters as American as "Rip Van Winkle." Moreover, it has that rarest of qualities in modern literature—nobility of conception. Maxwell Anderson is the most encouraging living figure in the American theatre, and perhaps in American literature. He is a poet who without that lamentable conscious effort to be up to date which afflicts so much contemporary writing, is yet extraordinarily vital. He feels the ring and tang of words, and both in the mastery of his technique and in his power of imagery and sense of rhythm, he is equaled by no other writer for the theatre either in England or America. What is most significant of all is that he is masculine—there is bone and sinew in his writing as there is in his thought. In an age in which writing is too often ugly or neurotic, in which the expression is by turns brutal and effeminate, Anderson is at once male and wholesome. If, as has been asserted, there is something Elizabethan in the quality of his diction, it is not the result of imitation, but because the man himself possesses a freedom of thought and a masculine daring in the expression of that thought, such as was the rule in the Elizabethan age. Mr. Anderson's words and phrases are the spontaneous and inevitable clothing of his spirit and ideas. There is in them, despite their frankness, nothing petty, or mean, or dirty. Life to him is a struggle, but a noble struggle, even more than ever when that struggle ends in worldly failure. To attend an Anderson play is to feel a fresh wind from the sea or the mountains dispersing the miasmic mists which rise like vapors of a witch's brew from the cauldrons of the so-called intelligentsia.

Yet there have been critical voices which have not hailed "High Tor." These have accused it of confusion, of the mingling of discordant elements, have argued that the ghosts of the Dutch mariners are introduced without sufficient preparation, and that the comedy scenes are out of place. I do not hold with these critics in these three latter charges, for it seems to me these scenes, daringly introduced as they are, require that daring to be made acceptable at once, and are necessary to fill in and round out the poet's intention. There is, however, a certain confusion—the play is not always of a piece in the character of Van Dorn, the young man who owns the mountain. Van Dorn is in essence a poetic figure; yet in the first scene he is a rather unimportant young man of realistic language—then suddenly he becomes a visionary. Now there have been such conversions, but in art they must be led up to, in which case the conversion itself becomes the essence of the play. As this was not Mr. Anderson's intention, Van Dorn should have been of a piece from the beginning. Yet despite this defect, "High Tor" is an extraordinarily moving and upliftng play, and one worthy of the accolade of the Critics' Prize.

The Pulitzer Prize went to "You Can't Take It with You." This award would have caused astonishment, if it had not been for the fact that nothing any more causes astonishment in the theatre awards of the Pulitzer Committee. "You Can't Take It with You" is delightful entertainment, but it is scarcely a play of the caliber of "High Tor" or of Mr. Anderson's other play, "The Masque of Kings." As a story it is trivial, and the characterizations, while amusing and lovable, are far from profound. It is a play intended solely for entertainment, a specimen of the commercial play at its best. There may be in it a certain amount of criticism of life, but it is criticism whimsical rather than penetrating. We come away from "You Cant Take It with You" refreshed and amused, but that the play possesses any permanence or real artistic importance is questionable. Perhaps the Pulitzer Committee felt that Mr. Anderson was getting too many honors, but this attitude, while human, scarcely embodies the intention of the founder of the prize. In short, in its dramatic awards the Pulitzer Committee needs to take its work more seriously. Its choices for the last few years has been distinctly disappointing.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Another Dawn

"ANOTHER DAWN" brings another triangle, but a most restrained and dignified triangle, so sophisticatedly treated at times that spontaneity is completely lacking before the usual sacrificial solution. Kay Francis, Errol Flynn and Ian Hunter work seriously and intelligently for the most part, even if fiery enthusiasm in the romance goes unkindled. Action is held to a minimum, considering that the familiar British outposts with their bickering little Moslem warfare on African desert sands are the attractively photographed scenes of the drama. Smart dialogue is the main medium for interpretation, with frequent discussions explaining the viewpoints of the principals on ethical and unethical love.

The story is not particularly inspiring, telling about a woman who, thinking she is through with love, marries a British colonel whom she respects, goes with him to a desert military post, and there finds real love in the person of the handsome officer second in command.

Killers of the Sea

LOWELL THOMAS narrates Captain Wallace Caswell's encounters with dangerous fish in the Gulf of Mexico, a reasonably exciting narrative in which the use of many trick photographic shots, artificially apparent at times, lends novelty to the unreeling of the undersea knife-in-mouth destruction of such finny creatures as pygmy whales, tiger-sharks, octopi, and the climactic encounter with a saw-fish and sword-fish. It is a marked departure from routine film form, with no pretense made by the producer, Raymond Friedgen, to inject story material.

JAMES P. CUNNINGHAM.

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Communications

THE SUPREME COURT DEBATE

Minneapolis, Minn.

TO the Editor: Not being an optimist, but only a defeatist lawyer, I am reasonably certain that this letter will be swept along with thousands of others into the particular receptacle kept for that purpose. Nevertheless, for my own satisfaction as a Catholic, may I make a few observations in regard to Father Ryan's article in the April 16 issue of THE COMMONWEAL under the quite inaccurate heading of "The Supreme Court Debate."

Father Ryan's views perhaps are not unaffected by his intense desire for the immediate passage of legislation to correct social and economic problems now confronting the country. Some might be inclined to believe that "must" and "now" legislation is neither necessary nor desirable. But expert that Father Ryan is in his own field I should not wish to question his judgment in this respect.

Assuming that the country is confronted by social and economic problems which demand immediate solution, and assuming also that such problems can be solved by passage of legislation now, the danger incident to packing the Supreme Court to bring about such solution, at least so far as minority groups are concerned, far outweighs any good that might come from the adoption of the President's extraordinary proposal. In other words, it seems to me that some rights we possess in this country as Catholics and other rights which Catholics have always regarded as peculiarly their own are far more important than the right of any persons to a minimum wage, minimum hours of labor or similar rights.

Almost at the outset of his article Father Ryan suggests that religious minorities should not be more concerned about the maintenance of an independent judiciary "than any other group in the community." If the learned gentleman intended to say that the members of the majority group, that is, the white, Protestant, Gentile group, should be as much concerned about the President's proposal as members of the minority racial and religious groups in this country, I most respectfully disagree with him.

Father Ryan mentions the general welfare doctrine now being advocated by proponents of the President's plan. If Congress may pass legislation for the general welfare without reference to the reserved powers of the states, the express delegations of powers and the express prohibitions in the Constitution, then the rights of minority groups are on their way to destruction. At least such probability exists if too much power be placed in the executive or legislative branch of the government, either of which may unwisely respond to the wishes of the majority and disregard the rights of the minorities. The general welfare, as I see it, means the welfare of the majority of the people of the country, and if there should be any inconsistency between the general welfare on the one hand and express prohibitions protecting the minorities on the other, the general welfare theory now being preached will require a sacrifice of rights by a few for the benefit of the majority.

Father Ryan concedes that it is "metaphysically and physically" possible that some successor of President Roosevelt will in the future appoint to the Supreme Bench men who are willing to destroy the rights of religious minorities. He might have added that such appointees may not consciously destroy the rights of religious minorities, but will do so only on the theory of protecting the rights of the majority for the general welfare of the country. Father Ryan argues that the likelihood of a President appointing to the bench men who will destroy minority rights for the protection of the majority is so remote that Catholics should not be concerned about it. Perhaps he is right, but I respectfully submit that if even the tiniest possibility exists that the result might occur, then all Catholics ought to most vigorously oppose the President's plan.

Some reference to parochial schools is made by Father Ryan and he suggests that legislation affecting parochial schools could be passed only in the event a bigoted President, a bigoted Congress and bigoted legislatures would be elected to office in the future. May I suggest to Father Ryan that the large majority of people in this country who are not bigoted very sincerely believe that all private and parochial schools, at least for grammar school children, should be abolished. Their attitude is not based upon any feeling against any church as such, but rather is based on the proposition that all children, at least in the grammar grades, should be compelled to be educated in the same institution. To them the practise of our religion is one thing, the operation of our Catholic schools a totally different thing. The fact that intelligent people in this country who have no feeling against the Catholic church, the Lutheran church, the Jewish church or any other church, feel as they do is the best evidence, I believe, that this subject should not be confused with that of bigotry.

Father Ryan also makes this most amazing statement: "Moreover, too much reliance is placed by some Catholics upon the Supreme Court as a protector of Catholic rights. So far as I know, the decision in the Oregon school case is the only one in all our history which supports this assumption. It would be more prudent and more democratic to put more trust in the selection of the right kind of legislators than to place all our reliance upon the judiciary."

The above statement is amazing, not because of its context but because of its implications. One would suppose from reading it that the mere scarcity of decisions directly protecting Catholic rights in the Supreme Court of the United States is evidence of the fact that the Court has not been the protector of Catholic rights. We cannot quite understand the gentleman's reasoning. Everyone, we supposed, admitted that the Supreme Court of the United States in protecting the rights granted under the Constitution against the acts of Congress and the legislatures had protected the rights of all minorities. If Father Ryan is so naive as to believe Congress and the state legislatures have similarly protected such rights,

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then we call his attention to the fact that Congress and the state legislatures have repeatedly attempted by legislation to destroy minority rights. Is it not significant to him that we know from experience that the Court does protect our rights and that we know from experience that legislatures and executives do not do so? Perhaps his rather child-like faith in vote-seeking politicians is sufficiently strong to permit him to entirely disregard experience. If there is any doubt in his mind as to what Congress and legislatures have attempted to do let him read among others the cases of United States vs. Wong Kim, 169 U. S. 646; Powell vs. Alabama, 287 U. S. 45; Strauder vs. West Virginia, 100 U. S. 303; Bush vs. Kentucky, 107 U. S. 110; Brown vs. Mississippi, 297 U. S. 278; Bartel vs. Iowa, 262 U. S. 390; and Nebraska District of Evangelical Lutheran Synod vs. McKelvie, 262 U. S. 404; and De Jonge vs. State of Oregon, 81 L. Ed. 189. Let him read also the case of Cummings vs. Missouri, 71 U. S. (4 Wall.) 277, wherein the Supreme Court of the United States held invalid a provision of the Constitution of Missouri requiring the taking of a test oath. The defendant in this case, who was a Catholic priest, had been indicted and convicted for teaching and preaching as a priest without having taken the oath in question.

Might it not have been more proper, at least more fair, for Father Ryan to have pointed out a single decision wherein the Supreme Court of the United States had failed to protect Catholic rights?

Father Ryan's article also contains an intimation that opposition to the President's plan upon the minority rights theory may offend certain Catholic laborers who may have the mistaken notion that immediate passage of labor legislation is more important than the possible loss of religious liberty and other valuable rights in the distant future. May I have the temerity to say that this argument approaches the ultimate in supineness. If this were a question to be decided solely on religious grounds, there might be some merit in the learned gentleman's suggestion, but since there are good and sufficient reasons for the defeat of the President's plan without reference to racial or religious arguments, the contention that the Catholic group should refuse to protect its own selfish interests has no support either in reason or in common sense.

Father Ryan undoubtedly realizes that the most valuable rights that Catholics as well as all other minority groups possess are those rights protected under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. There is nothing in the Constitution in regard to parochial schools and there is nothing in the Constitution which gives to the parent any rights with respect to his children which are superior to those of the government. A most cursory examination of Court decisions will show that Congress and the states for many years have been attempting to interfere with certain rights which we have always possessed but which are not expressly declared in the Constitution. Some of these rights are referred to by Judge McReynolds in the case of Meyer vs. State of Nebraska:

"While this court has not attempted to define with exactness the liberty thus guaranteed, the term has received much consideration, and some of the included things have been definitely stated. Without doubt, it denotes not merely freedom from bodily restraint, but also the right of the individual to contract, to engage in any of the common occupations of life, to acquire useful knowledge, to marry, establish a home and bring up children, to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and, generally, to enjoy those privileges long recognized at common law as essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men. (Citations.) The established doctrine is that this liberty may not be interfered with, under the guise of protecting the public interest, by legislative action which is arbitrary or without reasonable relation to some purpose within the competency of the state to effect. Determination by the legislature of what constitutes proper exercise of police power is not final or conclusive, but is subject to supervision by the courts."

It is these rights which the courts have protected and it is these rights which legislative bodies and executives have repeatedly attempted to destroy—rights which exist without reference to religious freedom—rights which legislative bodies and executives have and or might attempt to destroy for the benefit of the general welfare were it not for the Supreme Court of the United States. It is these rights which the Court has protected and the suggestion that they can be better protected by vote-seeking politicians than by an independent court is to disregard what experience has taught us.

After all, why the haste to violate the constitutional provision as to amendment: why do that which may be technically within the rules but nevertheless immoral? Or perhaps Catholics are not concerned with morals. Why take even the slightest chance? Have Catholics so quickly forgotten what the old Church has always taught them; that the only liberty worth while is liberty under the law; to aid but never weaken those who have demonstrated their friendliness; to move slowly and surely; to obey the laws; to respect authority; and to impose but slight confidence in politicians who have no respect for the views of the Church which antedate even the horse and buggy days. Have Catholics so quickly forgotten the crimes committed against them and their Church by demagogue-led mobs? Let's not relinquish that which was purchased for such a price—that which has brought us so many blessings and such lasting happiness—for the questionable but at the most only temporary improvement, when it is all so unnecessary.

LEO P. MCNALLY.

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESS

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editor: I have just read your "Open Letter to the Press, on Spain." It is a truly admirable one in every respect, and well you deserve the gratitude and personal esteem of everyone interested in Spain, and also of every intelligent American.

M. ROMERA-NAVARRO.

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Books

About a Great Problem

Social Security, by Maxwell S. Stewart. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $3.00.

DISCLAIMING any intention of making a comprehensive survey of the field of social insurance, the author of this volume declares in the preface that there has seemed to be "a very real need for a somewhat shorter book written in a style which would appeal to a wider reading public." He adds that none of the numerous volumes that have appeared in recent years "dealing specifically with the Social Security Act has attempted to interpret that Act in terms of the experience of the Old World countries." The author is also preoccupied with the question whether insurance is "necessarily the final solution to our problem." The volume is divided into three parts: "The Challenge of Insecurity;" "First Steps toward Security;" and "New Horizons in the United States." The two most interesting chapters in the first book are: "Why Don't They Save?" and "The Failure of Relief." In the first, the author contends that the tens of thousands of families who are most in need of provision for the future and other contingencies of life do not receive sufficient income to save and that even if they did, the method of investing savings at interest has serious drawbacks. He prefers a system of annuities maintained by the government. The chapter on "The Failure of Relief" contains nothing new; nevertheless, it is an adequate brief statement of the various defects and difficulties in the relief system.

In the second part, the most important chapters are probably: "Criticisms of the Act" and "A Substitute for Life Insurance." In the former chapter, no important criticism seems to have been ignored. Here is the author's critical summary:

"Closely analyzed, the Social Security Act presents a striking series of paradoxes. Hailed as the most progressive social measure in this generation, it is in some respects thoroughly reactionary. Intended as a device to raise consumer purchasing power and stabilize our economic system, it threatens to unbalance the economic structure through its tax on low-income groups. Its unemployment insurance grants no protection to those who are now unemployed. Its permanent old age plan is considerably less liberal for many years to come, despite its great complexity, than the stop-gap state pensions. In the belief that they were following the principles of sound finance, its authors have created in the reserve fund a Frankenstein which might conceivably crush the financial structure of the country."

Mr. Stewart's "substitute for life insurance," especially for the very low income groups, is a system of weekly pensions, such as obtains in Great Britain. The British system, he clearly shows, is greatly preferable to the industrial insurance offered by American life insurance companies. He maintains that "the workers cannot bear even half the cost of an adequate system without a serious cut in living standards." He is referring, of

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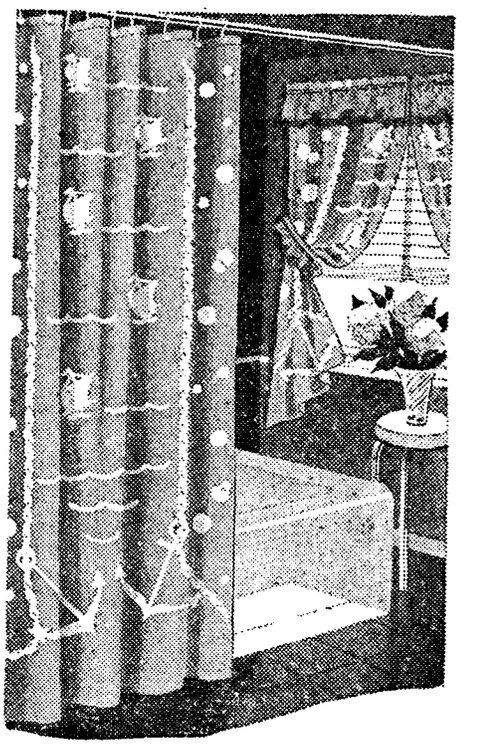

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course, to a comprehensive plan that would afford health insurance, as well as the other forms of security that we already have. The author gives convincing arguments for the proposition that adequate Social Security legislation would greatly promote economic stability and permanent prosperity.

The question of a sound and adequate system of Social Security is still a long way from solution in the United States. Before it is solved, multitudes of books and magazine articles will be written. Mr. Stewart's volume makes a definite, even though it be restricted, contribution to the solution.

JOHN A. RYAN.

Time of Change

Time Piece, by Naomi Jacob. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

THE TITLE of Naomi Jacob's novel, "Time Piece," is a good generic name for the class to which it belongs. This class of novel covers a long period of time, terminating in the present, and its philosophy is on the whole Heraclitian. The English, perhaps because they are beginning to feel an age in their bones which is no longer an oaken sturdiness, have been the chief practitioners of such fiction. Besides giving the type a name, "Time Piece" exemplifies it in all its characteristic features, though hardly at their best.

Miss Jacob's story opens in the sixties and continues down to the present day; it chronicles the rise and (comparative) fall of commercial fortunes; it traces the course of social change. The chief character is a woman, Claudia Marsden, whom we see emerging from what are considered Victorian repressions into the fulness of individual freedom. Whether or not this is meant to be a hollow victory is not clearly stated, probably because it is not clearly seen, but one is left with a feeling of hollowness. The feeling reflects the character: a "determined" and "forceful" person, she is the female quite familiar in the popular novel. Her head is screwed on tightly, so much so that she scarcely sees either to right or to left. Such a quality makes for getting on in the wine and in the farm-machinery business—which Claudia does—but it does not make for getting far into the problems of character, which are one of the novel's chief provinces.

Claudia marries at an early age into a Jewish family, but there is no "Jewish problem" for her. She marries a second time, acquiring a title, but she does not marry the man she loves, because she learns he is her father's bastard. She builds up the Jewish wine business and the titled farm-machinery business, raises her children, buys back the family estate, and the war comes; her children and relatives die or are scattered by circumstances. The telling of this makes a fairly longish novel, which is written without glaring ineptitudes or striking talent. It is, in fact, a "time piece," whose own time will probably be one-sixtieth of the time it attempts to capture; for most novels, like some wines, do not age well, and are best consumed quickly, if one has the taste for them.

GEOFFREY STONE.

A Non-Adult Art

Hollywood's Movie Commandments, by Olga J. Martin. New York: H. W. Wilson Company. $2.75.

THIS book by the former secretary to Joseph J. Breen, the Hollywood screen censor, starts off with a history of the movement to clean up the movies. Though Miss Martin gives opinions on both sides as expressed at the time, the need for this movement is now very generally acknowledged, and the charge that it would injure the quality of pictures has been proven false. The quality of the screen is today certainly superior to what it was before the organization of the Legion of Decency, and that the Church had its hand in the success of the movement is an occasion for pride. The filming of the great classics of literature and of episodes of history is a direct result of the censorship imposed and the necessity of the film companies discovering sources of material other than sex. But what is really interesting in Miss Martin's book is her exposition and discussion of the code which today governs the movies, and her analysis of what is and is not permitted. In the matter of sexual indecency the code seems on the whole to be salutary, though some of the details of its application seem rather foolish. And yet we must always realize that in the movies we are not dealing with an art intended for mature men and women, but with a form of entertainment in which the great majority of the audience are either children or adults with the mentality of children.

A code applied to the legitimate theatre with the meticulousness and lack of rigidity which according to Miss Martin's examples is the case with the movies would be disastrous; even the plays of Shakespeare would find themselves emasculated; but the movies are in a very different category. To those who believe that the screen should rival the stage as a mature art, this is a disheartening thought. Art must have freedom to flourish and grow to maturity, but the fact that children and the immature must always be the backbone of the screen public makes some sort of censorship necessary. Whether it always should be as strict as it is at present is another matter. In one respect, however, it might be stricter. The movies at present are too prone to make luxury the end in life. The spirit is certainly immoral, though it is not provided for in the code.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Whitewash

The Soviets, by Albert Rhys Williams. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.00.

THE AUTHOR offers a reference book on the Soviet Union, covering the most popular problems by eighty-eight questions and answers. Mr. Williams is well informed. His knowledge is not merely theoretical, as he lived nearly a decade in the U. S. S. R., and is able to illustrate his answers by many personal experiences and anecdotes. But a good reference book needs impartiality, a virtue unknown to the author. Though he feigns to be neutral, his book proves him an ardent Bolshevist sympathizer. His pretended information is veiled propaganda.

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Mr. Williams seizes every opportunity to arouse the reader's enthusiasm for Soviet achievement. When he mentions that the Reds lost after the war one-thirtieth of the czarist territory, he continues: "To repair these great losses quickly and then to push on to higher levels was the reason for the swift pace of the Five-Year Plans, the emphasis on industrialization and the Stakhanov movement for raising the output of labor." This whitewashing in the first answer is typical of the whole book. Everything unfavorable to the present régime is carefully concealed. Entirely omitted are the facts of Soviet terror, oppression of religion and churches, demoralization, destruction of precious tradition and culture, proletarian brutality, corruption, etc. And there is no intimation that the renewal of economic life after the civil war was mostly due to the energy of American and European engineers and the efficiency of foreign machinery.

Of course Trotsky's policy is judged as "sheer treason," and the "indignation of the masses," no doubt a result of Stalinist propaganda, is supposed to be spontaneous. Faithful Mr. Williams even imputes that defendants of the last trials really have been guilty; but he is at least clever enough to hasten his verdict and not discuss the delicate problem thoroughly. Still more is done in favor of the Soviet régime: Stalin's American shield-bearer is eager to impress upon you that a victory of Japan over the Soviets might destroy the prestige of the white race. Not just a Communist argument, but a 100-percent American one.

Readers naive enough to use this work as a trustworthy handbook will get a brilliant picture without shadows, the illusion of a Soviet paradise without blemish. The despots in the Kremlin may be satisfied. No inscribed member of the Communist party has done such excellent advertising of the Soviet Republic as the "independent" American author of this enthusiastic book.

MAX FISCHER.

A Strange Man

My Father's House: An Oneida Boyhood, by Pierrepont B. Noyes. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $3.50.

MR. NOYES'S boyhood among the perfectionist members of the Oneida Community was unusual to an extreme degree. This story has the interest of the uncommon; indeed, of the definitely exotic. Obviously the boyhood of an intelligent person who was the "stirpicultural" product of a "complex marriage" system, the son, illegitimate by ordinary standards, of a father who was also the spiritual father of an extreme and intensely sincere "Primitive Christian" heresy, should have rather unusual interest. It has. The book is a fine book, however, not primarily because of the uniqueness of so much of it as because of the universality of much more of it. The author writes with honesty and sympathy about childhood, human relationships and growing up. The twists given these human beings by the rare setting seldom obscure and frequently make more affecting their humane character.

For thirty years the Oneida Community lived the principles of John Humphrey Noyes, of which the most startling to the country at large were those of "primitive

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Next Week

SECURITY, by Goetz A. Briefs, deals with the formula which apparently best expresses the vital feeling of the dominant groups of the West since the Great War. Security and organization take the place of progress and competition. "This is a breakdown of the self-conscious individualism which characterized the capitalistic age." With deep and persuasive and really exciting insight, Dr. Briefs warns, "Let us not be fooled: the issue of security is not confined to the economic and social and political spheres; its ramifications reach into the realm of metaphysics." How inexorably the issues produce chaos when they miss the Christian definition of man is modern tragedy. . . . AGE AND POLITICS, by M. Whitcomb Hess, correlates "lack of reverence for the aged members of a community" with "moral retrogression." The philosophers and poets and statesmen from Plato and Aristotle to Franklin and Jefferson serve as texts for a short and pleasant and wisely unpointed essay. . . . Louis Minsky presents THE DILEMMA OF THE SECULARIST and shows it is not something to throw up against only Communists and Fascists. Pure secularism leads to a bankruptcy of society which can be demonstrated. Liberals of the old school who betray religion and moral forces impose the contradictions of extreme secularism. "Unlike the Leftist or the Rightist, the Church does not believe in worker-controlled or capitalist-controlled or other class-controlled states. Religion is guided by truth, morality and justice and the criteria are applied to all men and all situations." . . . FIGHTING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, by John A. O'Brien, is a continuation of the careful probing of the opposition to Communism. The actual distribution of wealth in this country is contrasted to the warnings of the Popes. Then the lessons of history written in the past and appearing all over the world today are written down. It is poverty, destitution and injustice that deserve early attacks. Spain and Mexico illustrate the encyclicals of the Holy Father.

Christian" Communism—Utopian Socialism—with the supposedly enabling (or causative) principle of no family: no possessive or "special" love. The first great break came in 1879 when Pierrepont B. Noyes was about ten years old, but there has never been a complete break. The mansion house is still occupied and Community Plate Silver means Oneida Community. But marriage was permitted and joint-stockism. Father Noyes stayed away, but remained from the distance of Canada or Niagara the dominant spiritual influence until his death in 1886. The son's honest impressions of the Oneida effort are a suggestive and valuable sociological document, as well as a super-quaint chapter of American social history. They enter directly by observation of actual behavior into the relations of religion and philosophy and economics and human nature. There is little about the problem of sexual relationships which so revolted the Community's contemporary enemies, for the author was a child and the Community children were slow to engage themselves with such problems. There is also really very little about metaphysics and religious belief and principle, although these engaged "Pip" from babyhood and were the reason for the Community. The autobiography is first of all a book of engaging humanism.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

A Good Beginning

Poems, by Ross Edwards Pierce. Cambridge, Mass.: The Arcturus Press. $1.50.

I SINCERELY hope that Mr. Pierce's little book will some day be a collector's item, for that would mean progress from a very good beginning. The book opens with a poem we were delighted to publish—as moving and satisfying a Marian lyric, despite its modernist form, as has appeared in a long time. And there is near the end a "Satire" as straightforward and picturesque as even a lover of Dryden could require. One should like to single out good passages, or images that have more to them than a mere outside, but there is time to say only that by no means everything is derivative although Eliot's influence is unmistakable. Indeed, this influence gets in Mr. Pierce's way too frequently by far. It is particularly noticeable when the poet is attempting to be sardonic.

A great deal is said in the book, and well said. Mr. Pierce is not afraid of fantasy, and one hopes he will continue to like it. Modern poetry needs few things more desperately. Being conscious of the ashes to which life can be reduced is all well and good enough, since there are plenty of such ashes about. But neither is it an act of abasement to kindle a fire.

This young poet takes his work very seriously. Occasionally that may make a reader smile, as old fogies just like us felt like laughing at the poets of a hundred years ago. But you can never feel sure the joke is on you. While Mr. Pierce's work is uneven and often manifestly overwrought, it is sometimes real and alive enough to make one sit up and look about at something one had never before seen.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

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A Guide to Washington

Washington City and Capital, by Federal Writers' Project. Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office. $3.00.

IN 1,140 written pages the history of Washington, capital of our country, unrolls itself. Composed by a vast assembly of writers, who had to be trained and organized in the shortest time possible on account of the National Emergency, it is considered the largest and most difficult editorial task ever undertaken in this country. The contents cover a wide range of material such as: "The General Background," "Washington of Today," "Tours in the City and Environs," "Executive Department of the Federal Government," "Independent Agencies of the Federal Government" and "District of Columbia Agencies." Then there are maps, plans, illustrations, general information and a "Calendar of Annual Events." For the study of American principles and our citizens in their governmental offices, this book has brought together material of great value. Not only will it be useful to the historians, but for any household that wishes to increase its knowledge of our country's capital.

Enticing

Sabu, the Elephant Boy, by Frances Flaherty. New York: Oxford University Press. $1.00.

IN THIS short but delightful story Frances Flaherty, wife of Robert Flaherty, director of "Man of Aran" and who is now presenting "Elephant Boy" to the public, gives us a glimpse of Sabu, the boy, and Irawatha, an elephant, who were the leading characters in that photographical drama based on Kipling's "Toomai of the Elephants." Mrs. Flaherty claims this to be a book for children. Well, it may be, but our adult public will suffer no harm by reading it, or by going to the film. In fact it is good to relax, and read and see the unusual as contrasted to our hurly-burly, civilized life. Through the courtesy of the United Artists a few stills of the film have been used in the book. Mrs. Flaherty, herself a good photographer, has given us some very fine illustrations along with her charmingly written theme on Sabu and his pet, Irawatha.

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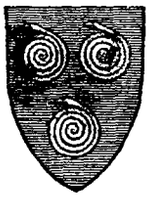

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